Val Ackerman

Nomination Form

HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

Name of Nominee: Valerie B. Ackerman
(first, middle, last)

Individual Submitting Nomination:

Name: Colleen Maguire - NJSIAA Executive Director

Phone: 609 259 2776

Street Address: 1161 Rt. 130 North

City, State, Zip Code: Robbinsville, NJ 08691

Signed: Colleen Maguire

Date: 10/25/21

Email: cmaguire@njsiaa.org

NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:

☒ Athlete ☐ Coach ☐ Official ☐ Administrator ☐ Performing Arts ☐ Others

Name of Nominee: Valerie B. Ackerman
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: 90 Franklin Street, Apt. #13
(street address)

New York, NY 10013
(city, state, zip)

Email: vackerman@bigeast.com

Phone: (917) 880-2746 Date of Birth: November 7, 1959

School Affiliation (if any) Hopewell Valley High School

City: Hopewell State: NJ

Place of Birth: Lakewood, NJ Date of Retirement: N/A

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain:
Val is the current Commissioner of the Big East Conference

If deceased, date of death:

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: Charles Rappaport (husband)

Address: Same as nominee

Phone: Same as nominee

Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Hopewell Valley Regional HS	Pennington, NJ	1977	Diploma
College/University: University of Virginia	Charlottesville, VA	1981	BA
Post Graduate School: UCLA	Los Angeles, CA	1985	JD

☒ Small Portrait-type Photograph of Nominee Attached (to be used for news release, etc.)
☒ Letters of Recommendation Attached
☒ Newspaper and/or Other Supportive Material Attached

ATHLETE

Athletic Participation in Senior High School [give complete details concerning specific performances, years, records, etc. Please note the classification of the high school (A, AA, etc.) and how many classes the state had in that sport.]

Val Ackerman attended Hopewell Valley High School in Mercer County, NJ. Hopewell Valley is currently a Group 3 high school - NJSIAA hosts 4 public school Groups with Group 4 being those with the largest enrollment. During Val's career, Hopewell Valley was a Group 2 high school,

During her career at Hopewell Valley, Val Ackerman won nine varsity letters: four in basketball, three in field hockey and two in track and field. She was captain of the Bulldog basketball and field hockey teams.

The information below was provided by Val's high school field hockey and basketball coach as there is not much documented by the press during these years. We could not locate her high school track & field coach. Lastly, there was little to no recognition or awards beyond the local county or conference area during these years.

1973-1974:
JV Field Hockey
Varsity Basketball (record 10-)
JV Track & Field

1974-1975:
Varsity Field Hockey (record 10-3-1)
Varsity Basketball (record 11-8) - MVP
JV Track & Field

1975-1976:
Varsity Field Hockey (record 9-2-2) - First team all county (received the most votes of any player)
Varsity Basketball (record 24-3) - First team all county - led all scorers with 19.4ppg - MVP
Varsity Track & Field

1976-1977:
Varsity Field Hockey (record 16-2-2) - Conference champions - Central Jersey Group 2 Champions - 13 goals scored (highest scoring defensive player in county history) - First team all county - County defensive player of the year
Varsity Basketball (record 17-10) - First team all county - led all scorers with 20.5ppg - 1,466 career points (leading scorer in Hopewell Vally high school for both boys and girls for close to 30 years) - MVP
Varsity Track & Field - County champion 440-yd dash

Class Salutorian
The Trentonian "All-1970 Field Hockey Team"

Honors (give complete details of high school and post-high school athletic honors and achievements, awards, and recognition received as a result of high school achievements)

In 1997, she was inducted into the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association Hall of Fame

Val attended the University of Virginia where she earned four varsity letters in basketball. She was among the school's first female students to receive an athletic scholarship. She was a three time captain and a two time Academic All American. She was the first woman to score more than 1,000 points at UVA and became the leading scorer in the history of UVA.

She received the University of Virginia Distiguished Alumna Award from the University's Women's Center in 1997 and was named to the Atlantic Coast Conference's 50th Anniversary Women's Basketball Team - 2003.

Other information *(not previously listed)*

After playing professional basketball in France, Val joined the National Basketball Association as a staff attorney in 1988.

1. 1989 - Val was one of the first NBA appointees to the Board of Directors of USA Basketball. Served as the liasion between the NBA and USA Basketball for the 1994 World Championships and the 1992 and 1996 Olympics.
2. 1996 - Val became the President of the newly formed WNBA.
3. 1998 - Val was named by "Sports Business Journal" as the 1998 Female Sports Executive of the Year, and by "Women's Sports and Fitness Magazine" as one of the twenty most influential women in sports.
4. 1999 - Val was inducted into the GTE Academic All American Hall of Fame.
5. 2005 - 2008 - Val served as the first female president of USA Basketball.
6. 2006 - 2010 - Val was named the U.S. delegate to the Central Board of the International Basketball Federation. (FIBA) While with FIBA, she also served as a member of the Competition Commission.
7. 2006 - Val was the recipient of the NCAA's Silver Anniversary Award for students who have achieved personal distinction since graduation.
8. 2008 - Val received the IOC's Women of Distinction diploma and the John Bunn Lifetime Acheivement Award from the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.
9. 2009 - Val became an Adjunct faculty member for Coumbia University's Master of Science in Sports Management Program.
10. 2011 - Val was inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.
11. 2012 - Val was acknowledged by the Women's Sports Foundation as one of it "40 for 40" honorees as part its celebration of the 40th anniversary of Title IX.
12. 2013 - Val was named Commissioner of the Big East Conference and received USA Basketball's Edward S. Steitz Award
13. 2013 - Val began to serve on the Executive Committee of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, The Board of Directors of the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, and the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics.
14. 2021 - Val was inducted into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame as a contributor.

She serves on the Board of Trustees of the Basketball Hall of Fame and she is an officer of USA Basketball.

Colleen Maguire

From: Barbara Skiba <bskib@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 14, 2021 1:14 PM
To: Colleen Maguire
Subject: Re: NJSIAA Request - Val Ackerman

Hi Colleen,

Here is some information regarding Val Ackerman's high school career at Hopewell Valley CHS:

1973-1977
Val also lettered in track and field. I have no statistics regarding this.

1973-74
JV Field Hockey
Varsity Basketball (10-7)

1974-75
Varsity Field Hockey (10-3-1)
Varsity Basketball (11-8)
Third top scorer in the county
15.1 ppg average
First team all Mercer County

1975-76
Varsity Field Hockey (9-2-2)
First them all county. Received more votes than any other player.
Varsity Basketball (24-3)
Val led all scorers with 19.4 ppg
All County First team

1976-77
Varsity Field Hockey (16-2-2)
Colonial Valley Conference Champs
Central Jersey Group 2 Champs
Val scored 13 goals...highest scoring halfback in the history of Mercer County Field hockey
First team All Mercer County in the Trentonian and Trenton Times
Trenton Times defensive player of the year
Varsity Basketball (17-10)
First team all Mercer County
Averaged 20.5 ppg
1466 career points—was Hopewell's leading scorer in basketball—boy's or girls—for years. Another HV girl broke the record years later

Basketball: MVP 3 years
Class Salutorian
National Merit Scholarship letter of recommendation
Graduated first in her class

As you can see, Val had quite an impact on our sports programs at Hopewell Valley CHS. I am so proud of her accomplishments. Val was voted one of the Top 20 women shaping the future of sports in Women's Sports Magazine. To quote Val: "We've turned a corner.

Gone are the days when women's sports were simply tolerated. Now they are celebrated."

An attractive, intelligent, and athletic young woman describes Val in her high school career. In 1973 I was hired at Hopewell Valley to teach physical education and coach field hockey and basketball. With the advent of Title 9 in 1972, girls sports were just beginning to take off.

Val was a freshman in 1973 so we started our careers at Hopewell at the same time.

She defiantly deserves to be in the NFHS Hall of Fame.I was honored to attend her induction into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in Knoxville, TN in 2011. And she was just inducted into the Naismeth Basketball Hall of Fame on September 11.

If there is any more information that you need, just let me know. Happy to be able to help out.

Barb Skiba

On Oct 11, 2021, at 6:07 PM, Colleen Maguire <cmaguire@njsiaa.org> wrote:

Barb,
Hello, my name is Colleen Maguire and I am the current Executive Director of the NJSIAA. Tripp Becker, Hopewell Valley HS athletic director, gave me your email address. I am in the process of completing a nomination form for Val Ackerman for the NFHS Hall of Fame. I am submitting her nomination as an athlete and we have been struggling to find many details about her high school success. Tripp believes you coached Val in both field hockey and basketball. I am reaching out to see if you would be willing to write a recommendation letter and/or email that highlights Val's athletic success, her team's success and any other information that would indicate her athletic prowess. Any communication can be sent to my attention.

We appreciate the consideration, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Colleen E. Maguire, Executive Director
NJ State Interscholastic Athletic Association
(609) 259-2776 (office)
(856)437-9074 (cell)
cmaguire@njsiaa.org

<image001.png>

Letters of Recommendation

1161 Route 130 North | Robbinsville, NJ 08691-0487
609.259.2776 | Fax: 609.259.3047 | www.njsiaa.org

September 27, 2021

National Federation of State High School Associations
Attn: Hall of Fame Selection Committee
PO Box 690
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Committee members,

It is with great honor that I nominate Val Ackerman for the National High School Hall of Fame.

Val's accomplishments are legendary and loaded with extraordinary "firsts." She was the first president of the WNBA. She was the first woman president of USA Basketball. She currently serves as the first woman commissioner of the Big East Conference.

But in addition to all that success, Val has remained an extremely humble and genuine person – a true role model for all women in any sports profession — and has always retained a connection with her high school athletics roots.

Val is a 1977 graduate of Hopewell Valley Central High School, in New Jersey, where she earned nine varsity letters in the sports of field hockey, basketball and track and field.

Her father was a graduate and long-time athletic director at that same school — which coincidentally was the school at which former NJSIAA Executive Director Steve Timko worked. In fact, Steve replaced Randy Ackerman there as athletic director. Val kept in touch with Steve throughout his career, and recently worked with the current athletic at Hopewell Valley to have the basketball court named in her father's honor.

Soon after I was named Chief Operating Officer in June 2020, Val reached out to congratulate me, and we later met for lunch. She has a genuine interest in interscholastic athletics and the role they play in the lives of teenagers. Despite her busy schedule, she has been eager to share information and insights gleaned from her extraordinary experiences at the very top of the sports world. Val has quickly become a role model and mentor to me.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Colleen Maguire

Colleen Maguire,
NJSIAA Executive Director

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Hopewell Valley High alum Ackerman pulling for Bulldogs in big football game

Updated: Mar. 29, 2019, 10:53 p.m. | Published: Dec. 07, 2013, 10:00 a.m.

By Paul Franklin | For The Times of Trenton

51380245RA005_Ackerman_PC.JPG

Val Ackerman is a Hopewell Valley High product and is now commissioner of the Big East Conference.

(Ray Amati/Getty Images)

A lot has changed at Hopewell Valley High School since Val Ackerman graduated in 1977.

The school didn't have a football program back then. The freshmen girls' basketball team didn't have its own uniforms. With Title IX just one year in place, the school had no budget for the sport, so it had to use the field hockey uniforms.

Advertisement

"Kilts," Ackerman said. "They were sort of a tunic with a belt and bloomers underneath. We didn't get our own uniforms until sophomore year, and they were inexpensive shorts and shirts. But at least they weren't the same field hockey had worn."

Thirty-six years later, the Hopewell Valley alum and the school's football program are in uncharted waters.

This season, the Bulldogs made the playoffs for the first time in their 10-year history, and tonight they will play for their first sectional title when they face Lawrence in the NJSIAA Central Jersey Group III championship game. The game will be carried live on 107.7 FM (WRRC).

Ackerman, 54, continues putting the pieces together as the new commissioner of the revamped Big East Conference.

She won't be attending the game, but her brother George, who lives in Titusville, will. Their mother still lives in Pennington.

"My rooting interest is pretty obvious," she said with a laugh. "Bulldogs all the way."

Her involvement in basketball has essentially been uninterrupted since those days in bloomers. After graduating as the school's all-time leading scorer in basketball and field hockey, she went to the University of Virginia where she became a three-time captain and two-time Academic All-American.

She received a degree in Political and Social Thought and went on to UCLA to earn a law degree. After one year playing professionally in France, Ackerman was hired in 1988 to serve as a staff attorney for the NBA and as special assistant to commissioner David Stern.

In 1996, she was named president of the WNBA and held that position for eight years. Since then, she has been involved administratively with the International Basketball Federation and USA Basketball and has served on several basketball-related boards.
In June, she was hired by the Big East.

Two days ago, she met with membership school presidents and athletics directors in New York City.

"We're very much back in business," Ackerman said, "but I would say we're still putting the league back together. We had to rebuild the entire infrastructure, so I've spent a lot of the last five months hiring staff, trying to figure out our office situation and, in effect, getting operations up and running. So far, it's all good."

A staff of 12 is temporarily split between the former location in Providence, R.I., and rented space in Manhattan. She estimates permanent headquarters in Manhattan should be settled within a couple of months.



Val Ackerman is a mover and shaker in the world of sports. The Hopewell Valley High graduate is shown here in this 2008 photo with former president George W. Bush at the Beijing Olympics.

A TV deal with Fox Sports was in place before her hiring, a long-term deal to air basketball games on Fox Sports 1, a national cable network, Ackerman said, reaches 93 million homes.

The men's basketball tournament will remain at Madison Square Garden, while the women's tournament moves from Hartford, Conn., to Chicago.

Ackerman lives in New York City with her husband, Charles Rappaport; they have two grown daughters, Emily and Sally.

"The hours are terrible," she said. "My husband and my cats haven't seen much of me in the last five months. Hopefully when we get past some of the start-up stuff, things will normalize, but I'm very excited to be here. Of course for me, it's a dream come true, working in a sport I know well and love."

She would love for her Bulldogs made school history with a championship. The opportunity is remindful of her junior year at Hopewell Valley when the girls' basketball team went 24-3, losing in the NJSIAA Group II Tournament semifinals to St. Rose at home in the final minutes.

She still holds the career scoring record with 1,466 points, but the team record was broken two seasons ago when the when the Bulldogs finished 25-3.

Ackerman was introduced to sports at an early age as her father, Randy, was the director of athletics at the high school. He graduated from Hopewell Valley in the 1950s when the high school was at the current site of the Toll Gate Grammar School.

"He really cared about team sports," said Ackerman about her father, who died 25 years ago. "Steve Timko followed him and had the same mind set. He was also on the ground floor of forming the Colonial Valley Conference. So I'm very proud to be associated with a high school that from the very beginning understood the value of girls' sports and made that adjustment."



2 trchristie HINDASH.JPG

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Julius Peppers

New
Information

NFHS HIGH SCHOOL HALL OF FAME

NOMINATION PACKAGE

SUBMITTED FRI. NOVEMBER 18, 2022

AMENDED NOV. 14, 2023



1997

JULIUS FRAZIER PEPPERS
SOUTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL | BAILEY, NC
CLASS OF 1998
COLLEGE: UNC-CHAPEL HILL FOOTBALL (1998-2001) & BASKETBALL (1999-2000)
NFL: CAROLINA PANTHERS, CHICAGO BEARS, & GREEN BAY PACKERS
2002 NFL DRAFT #2 OVERALL PICK | RETIRED 2018

Nomination Form

HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

Name of Nominee: Julius Frazier Peppers
(first, middle, last)

Individual Submitting Nomination:

Name: Brandon Moree

Phone: 919-240-7367

Street Address: 222 Finley Golf Course Road

City, State, Zip Code: Chapel Hill, NC 27517

Signed: 

Date: Nov. 14, 2023

Email: brandon@nchsaa.org

NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:

☒ Athlete ☐ Coach ☐ Official ☐ Administrator ☐ Performing Arts ☐ Others

Name of Nominee: Julius Frazier Peppers
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: C/O Bessie Brinkley (Mother) 3017 New Watkins Lane
(street address)

Raleigh, NC, 27616
(city, state, zip)

Email: CarlCoreyJr@gmail.com (agent)

Phone: 919-201-0096 Date of Birth: 1/18/1980

School Affiliation (if any) Southern Nash High School

City: Bailey State: NC

Place of Birth: Wilson, NC Date of Retirement: 2018

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, please explain:

If deceased, date of death:

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: Mother: Bessie F. Brinkley

Address: 3017 New Watkins Lane, Raleigh, NC, 27616

Phone: N/A

Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Southern Nash High School	Bailey, NC	1998	Diploma
College/University: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Chapel Hill, NC	2002	B.S.
Post Graduate School: N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

☐ Small Portrait-type Photograph of Nominee Attached (to be used for news release, etc.)
☐ Letters of Recommendation Attached
☐ Newspaper and/or Other Supportive Material Attached

ATHLETE

Athletic Participation in Senior High School [give complete details concerning specific performances, years, records, etc. Please note the classification of the high school (A, AA, etc.) and how many classes the state had in that sport.]

Julius Peppers attended Southern Nash High School in Bailey, NC. He played football, basketball, and ran track at the 3A school (NC has 4 classifications). Peppers never played football until his high school coach, Ray Davis convinced him to come out for the football team his sophomore year. Peppers was 6' 7", 250 pounds and ran a 4.6 second 40-yard dash as a sophomore, so naturally he chose to play running back. In his first seaons playing football, Peppers rushed for 1,044 yards and 15 touchdowns on the varsity team. He finished his football career at Southern Nash with 3,501 yards and 38 rushing touchdowns, catching six more scores.

Peppers was the Big Eight Conference Player of the Year in basketball in 1996, finishing his career at Southern Nash with more than 1,600 career points, 1,000 career rebounds, and more than 500 assists. Peppers was a four-event threat in track as well, participating in the triple jump, shot put, 400 meters, and the 4 X 400 relay. He finished third in the state meet in the Triple Jump in 1996 and was a part of the state championship 4x400 meter relay team from Southern Nash in 1998, helping the school win its first team State Championship in men's Track & Field program history.

Peppers was the NCHSAA Male Athlete of the Year in 1998. He was a first-team Parade All-American in 1997 (football), and was the football team's Most Valuable Player for three straight years.

Honors (give complete details of high school and post-high school athletic honors and achievements, awards, and recognition received as a result of high school achievements)

Peppers attended the University of North Carolina on a football scholarship and also played on the University's Basketball Team. As a member of the Tar Heels 1999-2000 Final Four, he averaged 15 minutes a game and just under 5 points per contest. Peppers is the only athlete to play in both an NCAA Final Four and the Super Bowl. (Donovan McNabb was a part of a Final Four team as a reserve, but did not see the floor at the Final Four as a walk-on reserve for Syracuse). After two years of playing football and basketball at UNC, Peppers decided to focus on football, where he ranks as 2nd all-time in school history with 30.5 sacks in his career.

His list of awards at the collegiate level is extensive:
- First-team All-ACC as a sophomore
- Led the nation in QB Sacks with 15 as sophomore (2000)
- Second-team All-American honors (sophomore)
- First team All-ACC (junior) (2001)
- Unanimous First Team All-American (junior)
- Won 2001 Chuck Bednarik Award (Nation's top defensive player)
- Won 2001 Bill Willis Trophy (Nation's best defensive lineman)

Peppers went on to play professionally in the NFL, playing from 2002-2018, in three different franchises. Peppers was drafed with the second overall pick by the Carolina Panthers in 2002, staying with the franchise through 2009, returning to the team from 2017-2018. Peppers also spent time with the Chicago Bears (2010-2013) and the Green Bay Packers (2014-2016).

Much like his list of collegiate accolades, his lis of awards in the NFL is lengthy:
- NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year (2002)
- 3x First-team All-Pro (2004, 2006, 2010)
- 3x Second-team All-Pro (2008, 2009, 2012)
- 9x Pro Bowl selection
- NFL 2000s All-Decade Team
- NFL 2010s All-Decade Team
- Pro Football Writers Association (PFWA) All-Rookie Team (2002)
- 100 Greatest Bears of All-Time
- North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame inductee (2021

Other information (*not previously listed*)

Peppers is an outstanding humanitarian as well. He was nominated by the Carolina Panthers in 2018 for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award for his efforts in eastern North Carolina after a pair of devastating hurricanes hit the state in the fall of that year. After retirement, Peppers has been a regular contributor to three charities the Center for Community Transitions, Girl Talk Foundation, and the Young Black Leadership Alliance.

Letters of Recommendation

Thursday, November 10, 2022

2022-2023 NCHSAA Board of Directors
Rob Jackson, President
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Bryan Tyson
Cabarrus County Schools
Tanya Turner
Perquimans County Schools
Larry Williford
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Elbert Lassiter
North State Football Officials Association
Joe Franks
N.C. Coaches Association
Wendell Hall
N.C. State School Boards Association
Burt Jenkins
N.C. Department of Public Instruction

Dear NFHS Hall of Fame Committee:

It is my honor to submit Julius Peppers from Southern Nash High School in Bailey, North Carolina as a candidate in the athlete category for consideration of inclusion in the NFHS High School Hall of Fame. North Carolina has a proud tradition of high school athletics, and we firmly believe that Julius Peppers' accomplishments in high school, college, and professional athletics as well as his character, philanthropy, and his support of young people make him a highly qualified candidate for inclusion as North Carolina's first inductee in the athlete category.

Amazingly, Peppers never played football until his sophomore year in high school when his school's football coach, Ray Davis, talked him into coming out for the team. What an incredible difference this decision and relationship made in the life of Julius Peppers! Without the influence of Coach Davis talking Julius into playing football the Carolina Panthers would never have reached the Super Bowl in 2003, as Peppers was a disruptive force on that defensive team that went from worst defense in the league in 2001, to second-best defensive unit in the league in Peppers' rookie season of 2002. Maybe without that nudge from Coach Davis in high school, we still would never have seen an athlete play in both the Final Four and a Super Bowl!

As a 6'7", 250 pound running back at 3A Southern Nash, Julius rushed for over 1,000 yards in his first season playing football and amassed more than 3,500 career rushing yards and 44 total touchdowns. If you view the video, included in the supporting materials as a link to a story from WRAL-TV, you'll find that Peppers was a rare combination of power, speed, and grace at the running back position.

He also participated in basketball and track at Southern Nash. He helped the Firebirds Men's Track Team to the school's first team State Championship in the sport in 1998. Peppers ran as a member of the school's 4 X 400 Relay team that won the 3A State Championship in the event by more than a second at 3:23.10. He also finished second in the Triple Jump with a performance that spanned 46' 10".

Peppers was an outstanding basketball player for Southern Nash as well, scoring more than 1,600 points and grabbing more than 1,000 rebounds during his career at the school. He went on to play football and basketball at the University of North Carolina, averaging 16 minutes per game on the Tar Heels 2000 Final Four team under Bill Guthridge before choosing to focus on football after two years playing both sports for the university.

It is easy to see how high school athletics made an impact in the life of Julius Peppers; and it is even more apparent how Julius is committed to making an impact in young people's lives as he seeks to give back to his community. Peppers was a finalist for the NFL's Walter Peyton Man of the Year Award in 2018, selected by the Panthers as their nominee for that prestigious honor, because of the charitable work that Peppers did when two destructive hurricanes ravaged eastern North Carolina in 2017.
Peppers is a regular contributor to his community, supporting three charities that seek to support young people and families in our state. Peppers has donated

to the Young Black Leadership Alliance and the Girl Talk Foundation, both groups empowering young leaders and helping equip them to be successful in school and life. He has also been involved with the Center for Community Transitions, a group that offers assistance to families dealing with someone who has been incarcerated.

As one of the top five members of the NFL's all-time sack list, a multi-sport athlete throughout high school and college, and a generous, active, and involved community leader, we believe that Julius Peppers' accomplishments, life's work, and connection to Southern Nash High School more than qualify him for inclusion in the NFHS Hall of Fame. It would be my distinct honor as Commissioner of the NCHSAA to hang the NFHS Hall of Fame medallion on Julius Peppers as the first individual from the athlete category from our great state to join this prestigious Hall of Fame.

Warmest Regards,



Que Tucker
NCHSAA Commissioner

NASH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
930 EASTERN AVENUE, NASHVILLE, NC

To: NCHS Hall of Fame Committee

From: Angie A. Miller, Executive Director of Athletics

Re: Julius Peppers

Date: 11/[illegible]/22

I am writing to endorse the nomination of Julius Peppers to the NCHS High School Hall of Fame. Peppers began his high school career at Southern Nash High School in Bailey, NC, in 1994. He was 6 ft. 5 in. and weighed 225 lbs. Peppers had never played organized football before. With his size and athleticism, the coaches felt he would bring a strong presence to the gridiron for the Firebirds. During his high school years, he played running back and defensive lineman, and his career finish was 3,501 rushing yards and 46 touchdowns. He was one of the biggest threats as a lineman in the state of North Carolina. Also as a Firebird, he excelled at basketball, lettering and being voted All-Conference for four consecutive years. As a Track and Field sprinter, Peppers helped Southern Nash High School win the state championship for the first time in the school's history. He won in the 4x200 meter team relay and as a triple jumper. His senior year, Peppers was named to the Parade magazine high school All-American team in football as an all-purpose talent. In 1998 Julius Peppers was named Male Athlete of the Year by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, which at that Nash County Public Schools. During his high school stint he was named by the Rocky Mount Telegram as one of the 50 Greatest Athletes from the Twin Counties (i.e., Nash and Edgecombe).

Peppers has been a dedicated supporter of the Southern Nash Firebirds and of all of the Nash County Schools athletes and teams. He continues to mentor and guide fellow athletes in his hometown as an adult. Peppers is a dedicated, remarkable gentleman with outstanding character. We at Nash County Public Schools highly recommend him for this most prestigious award.

Sincerely,

Angie A. Miller

Angie A. Miller, Executive Director of Athletics and Wellness
Nash County Public Schools

Southern Nash High School
6446 Southern Nash High Road
Bailey, North Carolina 27807
"Students First"

To: NCHS Hall of Fame Committee

From: Ray Davis, Former Head Football Coach & Athletic Director

Re: Julius Peppers

Date: 11/12/22

As the athletic director and head football coach at Southern Nash High School during Julius Pepper's attendance, I would like to recommend him for induction into the NCHS High School Hall of Fame. I want to focus on his character, which is clearly his best attribute and defines him as a respectable man.

Julius was blessed with the physical stature and athleticism to give him a natural advantage over most competitors. He was also blessed with hard-working parents who taught him early in life the value of effort. His parents also taught him to respect others and that kindness was necessary to be successful in life. I met Julius when he was in the ninth grade, and I immediately thought of him as a gentle giant. Despite his overwhelming size and formidable talent, he never looked down on anyone, and never tried to gain attention just because he could. Julius was always a team player, not a one-man show. No matter what position or role he had on a team, he wanted to be a value to the whole team and do his best. To this day, I've never known him to depart from that way of thinking.

Julius is highly respected by everyone who has had the pleasure to compete with and against him. Furthermore, he continues to do for others, mentoring in his hometown community, and be a loving father and husband. He is the epitome of a strong athlete, role model, and leader, and I highly recommend him for this outstanding honor as a NCHS High School Hall of Fame candidate.

Sincerely,

George Ray Davis
Former Head Football Coach and
Athletic Director of Southern Nash High School.

CAROLINA PANTHERS

November 18, 2022

NFHS Hall of Fame Committee
PO Box 690
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Dear NFHS Hall of Fame Committee:

From Bailey to Southern Nash High School to the University of North Carolina to the Carolina Panthers, Julius Peppers has made a tremendous difference in communities across North Carolina. Julius' support of various initiatives has enabled him to touch the lives of countless citizens in the Tar Heel state. His impact makes Julius a unique and highly qualified candidate for induction into the NFHS National High School Hall of Fame.

Our relationship with Julius began when the Panthers selected him in the first round of the 2002 NFL Draft, continues for 16 years until his retirement following the 2018 season and continues today as a Panthers Legend, where he uses his platform to serve the needs of communities throughout his home state. There are many recent examples.

After seeing photos and videos of damage along the coast of North Carolina and areas in the eastern part of the state caused by Hurricane Florence in 2018, Julius started the Hurricane Florence relief fund to provide relief to victims of the storm. Many of the hurricane ravaged towns reminded him of his hometown, which prompted him to spend several days in Robeson County in North Carolina and Marlboro County in South Carolina helping clean up.

Even after retiring, Julius has remained involved. In the spring of 2018, he supported local non-profit organizations that serve individuals transitioning from incarceration back into society, provided bail assistance for qualified non-violent offenders, helped young single mothers and worked to improve police and community relations. Leading us to the 2020 presidential election, he lent the strength of his voice and stature to a PSA for the team's voter engagement initiative that aimed to educate, register and mobilize voters in the Carolinas.

Thank you for the opportunity to share a firsthand perspective of Julius' legacy with the selection committee. We appreciate you considering him for induction in the NFHS National High School Hall of Fame Class of 2023.

Sincerely,

Khail Coleman
President
Carolina Panthers

Support Data

THE WILSON DAILY TIMES

Sports



Babe Ruth Southeast Regional Commissioner James Fenland, right, listens as Kent Montgomery talks about Fleming Stadium. Joining the two are, from left, Babe Ruth District 4 commissioner Nathan Stallings and WCYAA director Mickey Davis. Fleming is the proposed site for the Babe Ruth ages 13-15 Southeast Regional beginning in July. (Photo by Phil Goble Jr.)

WCYAA takes biggest step, to host regional

By Phil Goble Jr.
Daily Times Sports Editor

For five days this summer, Wilson will become the final step to the World Series — the Babe Ruth ages 13-15 World Series, that is.

The Wilson County Youth Athletic Association was officially awarded the league's Southeast Regional Tournament Saturday in a ceremony at the office of Athletic Director Mickey Davis.

"Our organization has come a long way in the last six or seven years and we're ready for it," said Davis. "We know we did real well with the state and district tournaments last year. We've hosted a 9-10 state tournament in Tar Heel (League) and a 15-17 state in Tar Heel.

"This is the biggest tournament yet, but I think we're prepared for it."

The event will run July 30-Aug. 5 and will be played in Fleming Stadium. Alternate sites will be used if weather interferes with the double-elimination event.

"When you walk into Fleming Stadium, ifs baseball; it shouts baseball," said Davis, who hopes to use the Fike, Hunt and Beddingfield high school diamonds for practices. "Ifs a great facility."

The tournament will field nine teams — Eastern North Carolina, Western North Carolina, Tennessee, defending champion Virginia, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and Florida. The final squad is an automatic entry from the host league.

The winner advances to the World Series in Little Rock, Ark., the week after the Regional.

"As far as I'm concerned, this (Fleming Stadium) is one of the top three facilities I've been in (for Babe Ruth)," said Babe Ruth Southeast Regional Commissioner and International Board Member James Penland, who represented Babe Ruth at the contract signing. "We appreciate Wilson County being a part of Babe Ruth. We'd like for the people to come out to the ball park and see some good games."

Many area families may also have a reason to go Fleming — Babe Ruth requires all players to be housed in private homes during the tournament.

That means the WCYAA is facing a daunting challenge — to find rooms for approximately 125 players.

"The biggest thing we take pride in is host families," said Penland. "We require

See Babe Burth, page 2B

WDT salutes Peppers

SNSH multi-sport star named Athlete of Year

By Phil Goble Jr.
Daily Times Sports Editor

STANHOPE — For four years, the name Julius Peppers has been synonymous with Southern Nash athletics.

Tile 6-foot-7, 250-pound standout excelled on the football field, basketball court and track, raising eyebrows with every touchdown run, two-handed slam, race and triple jump.

From all-area teams to all-conference squads, state and national honors, Peppers, said his former football coach and athletics director Ray Davis, has brought nothing but honor to the Class 3-A school in the tobacco fields of Nash County.

Monday morning, in front of more than 300 classmates, teachers and family, Peppers brought honor again, this time being named the 1998 Wilson Daily Times Athlete of the Year.

Peppers was chosen from among more than 1,200 athletes at 11 area high schools that comprise the Daily Times coverage area. The graduating senior headed a list that included Mark Strickland and Jennifer Laughridge of Hunt; Shemkia Reid of Fike; Antwane Yelverton of Greene Central and Roger Stone of Greenfield.

Peppers, the 25th recipient, becomes the second straight athlete from Southern Nash to be honored, following Rikki Cockrell in 1997. He also ends a run of four female winners, becoming the first male named since Beddingfield's Corey Thomas in 1993.

"He is one of those individuals that come along one in a million," said Davis, who coached Peppers for three years in football. "You don't find too many people who have that God-given ability and are that good a person."

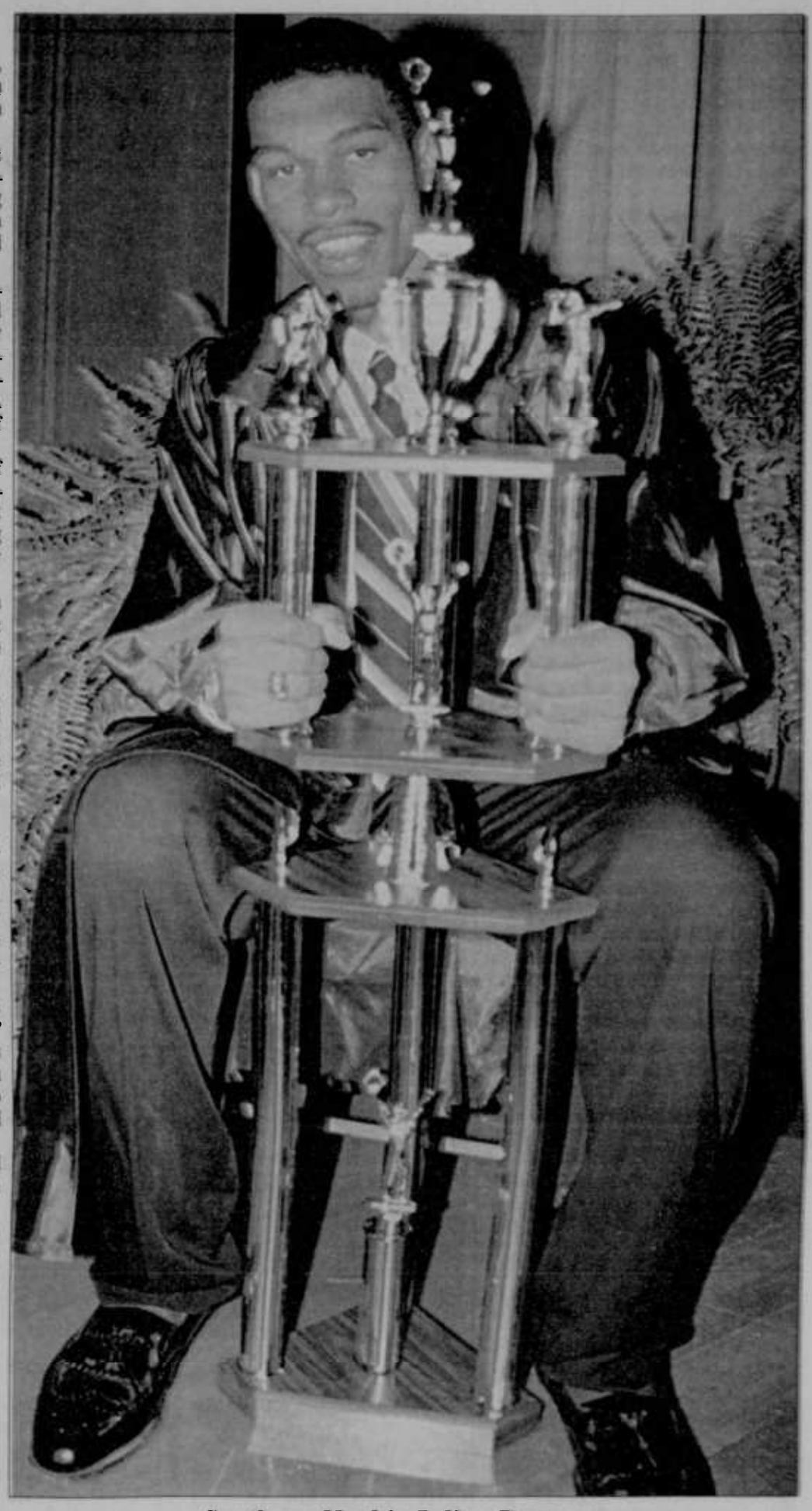
Known as shy and quiet around campus, Peppers is by far that on the field of athletic competition.

In football, the son of Bessie Faye Brinkley and George Peppers rushed for 3,501 yards and scored 38 touchdowns.

In 101 high school basketball games, Peppers scored 1,661 points, hauled down 876 rebounds; handed out 215 assists; had 151 steals; and blocked 142 shots.

On the track, he won the 1996 and 1998 N.C. High School Athletic Association Eastern Regional triple jump championship and was a national Junior Olympic long

See Peppers, page 2B



Southern Nash's Julius Peppers
... Wilson Daily Times Athlete of the Year

Warriors grind to first 3-A regional golf title

Hunt a state qualifier for fourth straight year; Demons>Parker earns first trip to Chapel Hill



Hunt's Chris McKeel won a playoff to finish the individual runner-up. (Photo by Tom Ham)

By Tom Ham
Executive Sports Editor

PINETOPS — The abundant array of championship banners adorning the Hunt High School gymnasium wall will soon include the only one missing in the sport of golf.

Hunt now owns a regional championship.

The Warriors, Big Eight Conference champions in all five years of the league's existence, grinded down the stretch to add the N.C. High School Athletic Association Class 3-A Eastern Regional championship to their lengthy list of laurels on a cloudy Monday and m occasional light rain at Maccripine Country Club.



Beddingfield golfers wore wrist bands in memory of two classmates who died in a weekend auto accident. (Photo by Tom Ham)

Coached by Jeff Best, Hunt posted a 309 total for its low four individuals to qualify for the NCHSAA 3-A Championship for the fourth consecutive year.

The Warriors trimmed North Lenoir of the Coastal Conference. Led by medalist Matthew Denmark, a junior, the Hawks carded a 311. Hunt and North Lenoir were joined by Coastal Conference champion White Oak in seizing state berths. White Oak finished third at 322.

Manteo finished fourth at 333, followed by Southern Nash at 335, Fike, in third place after nine holes, at 336, Beddingfield at 343, Kinston at 344 and Havelock at 366.

Beddingfield players dealt with the grief that resulted when fellow athletes/classmates Rebekah Anderson and Benji Edmondson lost their lives in a traffic accident Saturday evening. The players painted around their wrist a dark band that included the initials of their departed classmates and dedicated their regional effort to their memory.

Senior Michael Hooks said the wrist band was a reminder, "that when you hit a bad shot, it's not worth getting mad about it."

Fike senior Rob Parker was among three players not members of state-qualifying teams to earn a trip to Chapel Hill. Parker qualified for his first state appearance with a 39-39—78.

He was joined by freshman Ben Eisner of Manteo with a 38-35—73 and sophomore Mark Hale of Kinston with a 37-37—74.

Denmark, playing in the same group with senior Will Pope and junior Chris McKeel of Hunt, turned in a machine-like performance in firing a 35-35—70, 1-under-par over the 6,200-yard Maccripine layout that played at near-maximum difficult with testy pin placements and faster-than-usual greens that had been double-cut three consecutive days.

McKeel birdied the first hole of a sudden-death playoff to best Eisner for second place. McKeel fashioned a 38-35—73 in a round that included two birdies. Without a birdie for his second straight round, Pope, headed to East Carolina University, came in with a 38-38—76.

The Warriors also counted a 41-38—79 from freshman Scott deKeyzer, while junior Taylor Lyon and sophomore Hyatt Field each shot 81. Senior Dwayne Baker

See Hunt, page 2B



Matthew Denmark of North Lenoir fired a 70 to pace the regional field. (Photo by Tom Ham)

NEWSPAPERARCHIVE
Wilson Daily Times, May 12, 1998,Pg. 13, Wilson, North Carolina, US
https://newspaperarchive.com/wilson-daily-times-may-12-1998-p-13/

Babe Ruth Southeastern Regional set

(Continued from page IB)
you put a minimum two (players) to a home.

"That (finding families) is the biggest challenge. Years ago, that wasn't a problem. Now, parents have become more cautious. It's getting tougher and tougher to get homes."

Players will be in homes anywhere from two to five days, depending on how far their team advances.

"That (housing) is a worry," said Davis, "but we've had a lot of people volunteer and we'll handle it."

And if they handle it — and the rest of the tournament — well, Davis and Penland agree a World Series could be on WCYAA's horizon.

"Definitely," said Davis of WCYAA hopes of running a World Series. "If we were going to do a tournament for a one-shot deal, we wouldn't do this.

"When this is over, we'll sit down and look at it. If we feel we've done the job for Wilson County and Babe Ruth, then the letter will go in."

Then the major fundraising will begin. While the Southeast Regional will cost WCYAA $2,500, the World Series takes a commitment of $40,000.

"Rest assured, it (WCYAA and Fleming) meets all the requirements for a World Series," said Penland.

The commissioner said the earliest open date at the moment is 2001, but that could change if a current site is unable to host.

Davis is certain the WCYAA can live up to the responsibility.

"No one is going to outwork us," he said. "Wilson County is baseball and what else best represents baseball than a World Series.

"It's every kid's dream to play in a Babe Ruth World Series. If we do a good job, I think the World Series is ours."

That job begins in earnest July 30.

Hunt corrals long-elusive regional crown

completed the lineup with a 92.

Best explained he did not mention a regional championship as a feat his Warriors must accomplish, but admitted, "it's one I've been thinking about for a long time. It's the only banner we didn't have in the gym for the golf team.

"Of course, we wanted to qualify (for the state finals), but we wanted to do our best to try and win the regional. We didn't play spectacular and we didn't make a lot of putts. But we hung in there and did what we had to do."

The Warriors grinded through the difficult Nos. 16-18 stretch. McKeel and Pope each parred all three layouts. Lyon and deKeyzer each surged down the stretch. Field played the first eight layouts at I-over before struggling, while Baker encouraged his teammates with a solid start.

"It was character at its best," Best said of the Warriors' performance.

Pope called a one-shot penalty on himself and deKeyzer, despite being a freshman, played with the poise of a senior by taking an unplayable lie rather than attempt a shot of extreme risk on three occasions.

Hunt golfers sensed they had clinched a state spot, but were uncertain of their regional-title chances. The Warriors capitalized when a North Lenoir golfer, whose score counted, suffered a triple bogey the final layout.

The Warriors, 3-A state champs in 1996, claimed the regional's final state berth last season and Pope exclaimed. "I feel 10 times better out here than I did last year this time."



Fike's Rob Parker
... first-time state qualifier

Pope and McKeel persevered despite witnessing a dazzling exhibition from Denmark, who seldom missed a shot and putted brilliantly from long-range in putting together the regional's only under-par round.

Denmark birdied Nos. 2, 3 and 12 and was boosted by rolling in a long, downhill putt on the treacherous No. 2 green. His bogeys occurred at Nos. 9 and 17.

"I made really long putts at Nos. 2 and 11 and the one at No. 2 got me started," said Denmark. "I hit the ball great. To play this course, you just had to control the ball and two-putt.

"I was excited, but I was kind of nervous because of great players here like McKeel. I haven't been playing that well lately and I didn't want to play badly in the same group with him."

The Hawks also got an 80 from Denmark's freshman brother, Stephen; an 85 from senior Brent Pelletier, a top-10 regional finisher in 1997; and a 76 from senior Dusty Harrison.

White Oak was paced by senior Lance Oliver, last year's regional runner-up, with a 78.

Parker is state-bound despite problems at Nos. 16 and 18 (4-over).

"This was pretty much my main goal," Parker said of his state opportunity. "But I wasn't sure I made it and I didn't want to go and get happy — and then find out I didn't. I hit it great until No. 16.1 hadn't hit it that good all season and I wasn't putting bad. But I didn't think I was going to make it and, when I got in, I was not happy with the way I played."

Parker was a lot happier afterwards.

And Eisner, a tough-minded freshman, was not disappointed over his playoff loss to McKeel, who hit the par-5 layout in two shots and two-putted for birdie.

"I had heard a lot about him being a good player," Eisner said of McKeel, "and I am pretty excited. I just came out and felt my way around. I stuck a lot of shots close. It worked out pretty good."

Neither could Matthew Denmark complain about North Lenoir's runner-up finish.

"I am really excited about us going to the state," he said. "I think we gave Hunt a good run."

Now Hunt's focus is toward Chapel Hill.

"We've still got a little unfinished business," Pope said. "I can look back on winning this regional the rest of my life, but I am looking forward right now."

3-A regional golf results

N.C. HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
Class 3-A
EASTERN REGIONAL
Golf Tournament

(at Maccripine Country Club

TOP INDIVIDUALS			
Matthew Denmark, N Lenoir	35-35	—	70
Chris McKeel, Hunt	38-35	—	73
"Ben Eisner, Manteo	38-35	—	73
"Mark Hate, Kinston	37-37	—	74
"Rob Parker, Fike	39-39	—	78
Will Pope, Hunt	38-38	—	76
Lance Oliver, White Oak	40-38	—	78
Dusty Harrison, North Lenoir	39-37	—	76
Scott deKeyzer, Hunt	41-38	—	79
Matt Pullen, Kinston	43-37	—	80

•HUNT (309)			
Chris McKeel	38-35	—	73
Will Pope	38-38	—	76
Taylor Lyon	42-39	—	81
Scott deKeyzer	41-38	—	79
Hyatt Field	39-42	—	81
Dwayne Baker	49-43	—	92

•NORTH LENOIR (311)			
Matthew Denmark	35-35	—	70
Brent Pelletier	42-43	—	85
Dusty Harrison	39-37	—	78
Dean Cox	46-48	—	94
Stephen Denmark	38-42	—	80
Brandon Grant	51-57	—	108

•WHITE OAK (322)			
Lance Oliver	40-38	—	78
Kris Nelson	44-38	—	82
Brian Cone	42-42	—	84
Cliff Ray	41-40	—	81
Evan Erwin	45-42	—	87
Ryan Brown	39-42	—	81

MANTEO (333)			
Ben Eisner	38-35	—	73
Ryan Stormont	41-39	—	80
J o Sheppard	46-52	—	98
Matt Ottario	49-49	—	98
Ryan Bridgewater	44-43	—	87
Sean Olds	47-46	—	93

SOUTHERN NASH (335)			
Gorham Bradley	40-42	—	82
Michael Whitley	45-41	—	86
Michael Strickland	45-47	—	92
Josh Floyd	40-41	—	81
Justin Carter	52-47	—	99
Derrick Hopkins	44-42	—	86

FIKE (336)			
Rob Parker	39-39	—	78
William Shreve	43-43	—	86
John Ream Watston	40-46	—	86
Clint O'Hara	42-44	—	86
John Shreve	46-45	—	91
Walker Abney	44-43	—	87

BEDDINGFIELD (343)			
Brad Perry	41-46	—	87
Mike Hooks	44-40	—	84
Jim Dubovec	49-45	—	94
Patrick McMahon	43-46	—	89
Justin Webb	41-42	—	83
Shane Davis	48-51	—	99

KINSTON (344)			
Mark Hale	37-37	—	74
Brandon Weils	47-46	—	93
Ray Deepa	52-45	—	97
Matt Taylor	49-55	—	104
B.J. Murphrey	66-70	—	136
Matt Pullen	43-37	—	80

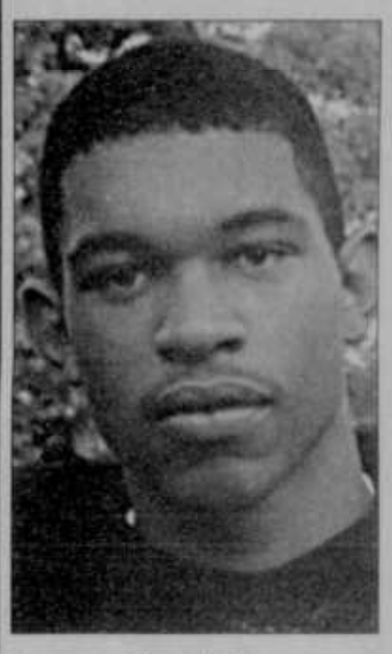
HAVELOCK (366)			
Teddy Neuhaus	41-43	—	84
Corbett Norris	54-52	—	106
Rob Hillary	56-45	—	101
Eddie Cruz	47-42	—	89
Frank Wasko	49-54	—	103
Mike Schwarz	46-46	—	92

INDIVIDUALS			
John Yates, Pender	41-40	—	81
William Jernigan, Hertford Cty.	41-45	—	86
Ashley Davis, C B Aycock	46-42	—	88
Joseph Spamhour, Pender	45-48	—	93
Spencer Pake Washington	53-46	—	99
David Cummings, SW Edge	52-52	—	104
Greg Mulder, Bertie			DNS
Justin Hagee, Washington			DQ

* — State-qualifying teams
" — State-qualifying individuals

WDT Athlete of the Year

Julius Peppers career



Football
All-Big Eight Conference
3 years
WDT All-Area
3 years
Shrine Bowl
1997-98
Parade All-American
1997-98



Basketball
All-Big Eight Conference
4 years
Big Eight Conference Player of the Year
1995-96
WDT All-Area
4 years
WDT Player of the Year
1996-97
Honorable Mention All-State
1997-98



Track
Regional Triple Jump champion
1998, 1996
Junior Olympic long jump finalist
1996
All-Big Eight Conference
3 years

(Graphic by Phil Goble Jr.)

Peppers is top WDT athlete

(Continued from page IB)
jump finalist (1996). Currently, Peppers competes in the shot put, triple jump and runs the third leg of the Eastern Regional-championship 400-meter relay for the Firebirds.

"I don't think anyone can question Julius' commitment to Southern Nash athletics," said boys track coach Alton Tyre. "I'm going to have some great memories of him. He's been a tremendous asset for this program."

An asset that has been on display almost continually since he began competing as a freshman.

In his first year, Peppers participated in basketball, track and Junior Olympic track.

With no break, the rising sophomore then played football, basketball, track, Junior Olympic track and Amateur Athletic Union basketball.

As a junior, Peppers played football and basketball before deciding to skip track for the season and summer. It was his first atliletic break in nearly three full years.

Peppers' final season may have been his best — Parade All-America in football with more than 1,200 yards rushing; honorable mention all-state after averaging double-figures in scoring and rebounding; the intimidating factor of a track team with more than a fair shot at winning the state championship.

He was also named the NCHSAA Male Athlete of the Year last week.

"I always thought I was one of the best, but I never proclaimed myself that," said Peppers, who has signed a national letter-of-intent to play football at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "It feels funny right now. I'm starting to realize it (high school career) is almost over. When I came here as a little kid, they weren't that good. I thought, maybe, I'd have a chance to make it (Southern Nash) better."

That, he has done with style.

In his career, Southern Nash returned to the football playoffs and captured an NCHSAA sectional championship in basketball. The track team has been proclaimed an Eastern Regional champion and, come Friday afternoon, could be proclaimed the 3-A state champ.

But for all his talents and abilities, Peppers said the real heroes are the men and women who coach the Firebirds.

"They treat everybody the same way," he said. "They don't care how good you are; they just want the best person playing sports. They did everything the right way."

The right for Peppers started in the ninth grade with Brian Foster, then an assistant and the recently-named successor to Davis as head football coach for the F'irebirds.

"When I was in ninth grade, he told me he knew I'd have the chance to play college sports," said Peppers. "He helped pick me up after a bad game. He was there to just talk. He helped my confidence out a lot."

Also there to prod and direct was Peppers' mother, Bessie Faye.

"She just stayed on me all the time about doing right and wrong," Peppers said. "When she would say, no, I used to get mad; now I see it was all the best for me."

And that has made Peppers the best he can be — not just for himself, but for his school and his county.

"I think just the character he has and what he's done for Southern Nash is incredible," said boys basketball coach Rick Ruffin. "It's amazing to see somebody 6-7 and 250 pounds do some of the things he does.

"More importantly, he's stayed on track and gotten an education. I'm glad to be associated with and coach the type of player he is. I'm going to miss him as a person; he'll be a good memory for Southern Nash."

And, with size 19 feet, Peppers will leave big shoes to fill for all

Athlete destined to become special

Tom Ham



Executive Sports Editor

From the freshman moment he stepped onto the basketball court for his varsity debut, Julius Peppers was destined to become special.

His tall, powerful frame implied, "I am going to be bad (awesome)."

Pretty soon, onlookers were anticipating an explosion from this youngster within a man's body.

Thus proceeded an argumentative career in the sports of basketball, football and track.

Peppers accomplished plenty — rushing for over 1,000 yards in football three consecutive seasons, accumulating over 3,500 yards and attaining All-America status; pouring in over 1,500 points and snaring over 800 rebounds, and being proclaimed the Big Eight Conference Player of the Year in basketball; and excelling in the triple jump and emerging as an impressive relays performer in track.

Tile aforementioned accolades only brush the surface. And, as graduation approaches, the honors are piling up. In a span of less than a week, Peppers has been saluted as the N.C. High School Athletic Association male Athlete of the Year and The Wilson Daily Times Athlete of the Year. More recognition is forthcoming.

Attesting to his potential and ability is the prompt willingness of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to offer him a football scholarship — which he accepted. The stipulations include allowing him to try basketball.

lb earn a scholarship with such a top-flight program as the one at North Carolina is, in itself, remarkable. And to suggest Peppers is athletic enough to play both football and basketball in the esteemed Atlantic Coast Conference is astonishing.

But did Peppers do enough? Could he have accomplished more?

Actually, Southern Nash's most celebrated athlete never went about prep sports with an "I am bad" personna. His demeanor was always laid-back, tolerant and perhaps considerate of his teammates and opposition. He shunned attention and the spotlight.

Gradually, Peppers displayed more of a willingness to take charge and, sometimes, was forced into that role. When that was the case, opponents were in big trouble. The involvement of his teammates always seemed a top priority.

Southern Nash head boys basketball coach Rick Ruffin points out that Peppers' contribution were multiple. He ranked among the team leaders in scoring, rebounding, assists, steals and blocked shots.

Perhaps, at times when he should have been thundering over and dominating foes and ruling the backboards, Peppers was conscious of involving his teammates.

His status as a powerful running back was obvious on the gridiron. Peppers also displayed breakaway capabilities.

Smaller defenders must have felt their prayers had been answered when the Firebirds' showcase back ran wide and afforded them an opportunity to tackle from an angle and go for the feet, instead of having to deal with his brute force straight-on.

On the track, Peppers was blessed with the ability to contribute in about every event.

The multi-sport star ended his prep football career with a name-taking, butt-kicking exhibition — the type of display easily envisioned for him.

His basketball farewell was less glorious. Peppers struggled against an aggressive, physical sophomore from East Chapel Hill. That night in Southern Nash's first-ever appearance in the 3-A Eastern Regional was one of his longest.

But Peppers bounced back and kept his promise to coach Alton Tyre to compete in track his senior season. Tyre says he never ceases to be amazed by Peppers' feats.

Onlookers won't soon forget his performance in the 400-meter relay in the Big Eight Conference championship meet. Peppers, running the third leg, took the baton several meters behind the front-runner and simply blitzed him.

"How's that for athleticism," said an admiring Tyre.

Perhaps many that followed Peppers were not certain of what to expect from him because of not being qualify to measure or appreciate his abilities.

After all, they were watchinga 6-foot-7, 245-pound athlete who performed with the versatility and agility of an athlete who stood 6-0 and weighed 180.

Southern Nash athletics stepped another level during Peppers' four years but could it be that he will be most remembered for being too unselfish.

Middle schools

Cougars, Hawks close with wins

Speight wrapped up its middle school baseball schedule on a winning note Monday, while Toisnot did likewise Friday afternoon.

Cougars edge Cobras

SARATOGA — Speight Middle School concluded its season with a 3-2 victory over visiting Springfield Monday afternoon.

The Cougars of coach Tom Riddle closed with an 8-4 record as Ryan Beamon drove in the winning run with a triple in the bottom of the sixth inning. Springfield forged a 2-2 tie with a run in each of the fifth and sixth innings.

Speight right-hander Michael Thigpen pitched the win, allowing two hits, walking three and striking out 11. Thigpen compiled a 6-2 record.

The Cougars, who struck for two runs in the fourth inning, got a hit each from Beamon, John Coffey, Thigpen, Todd Exum and Kevin Gardner.

Hawks blank Speight

Erie Morris and Travis Eatmon crushed consecutive home runs FYiday afternoon in a six-run, fifth-inning rally as Toisnot finished an 8-4 season with an 8-0 victory over visiting Speight.

Morris' shot was his seventh of the season , while Eatmon enjoyed a 2-for-2 day at the plate. Ricky Webb was 3-for-4 with a double for the Hawks.

Eatmon picked up the pitching win by striking out 12 batters and allowing only two hits.

Webber barred

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (AP) — Washington Wizards forward Chris Webber on Monday was barred by an administrative law judge from driving in Maryland for 120 days.

The restriction is punishment for refusing to submit a blood sample after a Prince George's County police officer concluded Webber was driving under the influence of marijuana in January.

NEWSPAPERARCHIVE
Wilson Daily Times, May 12, 1998,Pg. 14, Wilson, North Carolina, US
https://newspaperarchive.com/wilson-daily-times-may-12-1998-p-14/

THE WILSON DAILY TIMES Sftorts

Firebirds capture state championship



Top 10

1. Southern Nash	76
2. Greensboro Dudley	45
3. Durham Hillside	35
4. North Buncombe	34
5. T.C. Roberson	33
6. East Rowan	26
6. Kings Mountain	26
8. Havelock	22
9. Ragsdale	18
10. North Gaston	17



Southern Nash's Arthur Deans, left, and SouthWest Edgecombe's Deshawn Richardson race to the 110-meter hurdles finish. Deans won the event and Richardson took second.

(Photos by Grant Roberson)

So. Nash wins with total package

By Scott Jones
Daily Times Staff Writer

RALEIGH — Without a doubt, this year's Class 3-A boys track state champion has the best *team* in the state.

More often than not, the N.C High School Athletic Association track team title is more representative of which team has the most premier athletes, rather than a true gauge of depth and overall superiority. However, Friday at N.C. State's Paul Derr track. Southern Nash showed the rest of the state that, indeed, it has the total package in rolling to the school's first ever track state championship.

Southern, whose previous best state finish was 8th in 1995, blasted the competition just as it has all year, with this performance being much more impressive since it came against the best the state has to offer The Firebirds rolled to 76 team points, easily outdistancing runner up Greensboro Dudley's 45. Rounding out the top five were long-time 4-A powerhouse Durham Hillside (35), North Buncombe (34), and last year's champion. Skyland TC. Roberson (33).

Fike posted the next highest finish for area schools, amassing 16 points to finish tied for lith. Southwest Edgecombe rode Deshaun Riochardson's second-place showing in the no hurdles to tie for 23rd with eight points, and Beddingfield rounded out the area scoring by tying for 38th with 0M^rnts" ringbytyingf0r3" hwith

"It's been a team effort all year long," proud Firebirds head coach Alton lyre beamed. "It helped us having an all-around program. Roberson did well in the field, but couldn't score much on the track. Dudley was strong on the track but didn't have any field events. But we had them both — track and field. We had the total package."

Evidence that the Firebirds indeed possesed the total package is that Southern could roll to such an easy team victory while winning just two events after having qualified in 16 of the 18 events. However, second, third, and fourth places proved to be Firebird Country, and the rest of the state quickly found out that those points can add up in a hurry.

Southern's only individual champions was senior Arthur Deans. Deans edged a very familiar competitor, Richardson, to win the lOOhurdles. Both runner's posted a 14.2 second hand-time performance, but Deans won with the lean. Deans tripped on a hurdle in last year's regionals and did not qualify for the 110's, his specialty, and that trip up proved to be this year's motivating factor.

"I was making up for lost time," Deaus said of his personal victory. "This is a great way to end my senior year. We knew coming in we were the favorites, but we still had to prove it. And we did."



Southern Nash coach Alton Tyre raises his hands in victory after being doused with a water cooler by his athletes.

> *"All these guys have worked so hard since they've been here, it really makes me proud to see them achieve such an outstanding accomplishement."*
>
> — Alton Tyre
> Southern Nash boys track coach

Southern's other win came in the 1600 relay, proving to be a fitting finish for the Firebirds' dream season. Dudley took the early lead and seemed intent on preventing Southern from beginning its celebration with a championship in the final event. However, Southern's unit, consisting of Cornelias Gary. Brian Jones, Julius Peppers, and Derrick High would not be denied (High in particular) and battled back to win by nearly a full second with a time of 3:23.1.

"We knew that even with the 4-by-4 we would win the meet," said High, a junior that Tyre considers the heart and soul of the team. "But finishing second, that didn't satisfy us, so we had to win the 4-by-4."

High typified Southern's overachiveing attitude that prevailed throughout the meet High's surprise second place finish in the 200 dash turned Tyre's worried anticipation into a victorious grin. However, High's performance (he set the school record with a time of 21.96 in the trials) was just the cap on a day that saw Southern athlete's rise to the ocassion time and again.

"We came into the meet not knowing for sure we could win, but Coach Tyre had us believing," High said. "We just ran with everything we had, and it all just fell into place."

Senior Demaryland Cooper could not match last week's regional championship performance of 6-feet-10 in the high jump, instead he settled for runner-up status with a leap of 6-8 He more than made up for that slight regression, however, by posting career-best performances rn both the long and triple jumps. Cooper, a Western Carolina recruit, soared 22-7 to place fourth in the long jump, then bounded 45-1 to take fifth in the triple jump Peppers, the NCHSAA Athlete of the Year, nearly matched his career best with a leap of 46-10 to place second in the long jump. Robersons William Montgomery the meet's MVF. won each of the three events.

Southern took on the look of a winner with a blistering performance in the 800 relay. Tile unit of Gary, Jones, High, and Deans, which had already shattered the school record last week, re-set the school record with a blistering time of 1:27.78, good for a close second behind Dudley.

Deaas posted a runner-up showing in the 300 hurdles after setting a school record with a time of 39.4 in the trials.

"All these guys have worked so hard since they've been here, it really makes me proud to see them achieve such an outstanding accomplishement," Tyre said "We've worked since Day One with the goal of wining a state championship. All the time, all the effort has really paid off. These kids sacrificed a lot to be here. They don't have the fancy cars that other kids do because they practice instead of working. They gave up a lot for this team, and it really is good to see all that hard work pay off with something like this."

The only other area hurrah came when Fike's Tim Wells came from nowhere to sprint to victory in the 400 dash. Wells was seeded just sixth coming into the finals, but he blazed past the field coming out of the last turn, outstriding Burlington Williams to the line with a time of 50.05.

Demons advance

By Jay Mumford
Daily Times Staff Writer

FUQUAY-VARINA - Fike High School's version of "Murderer's Row" came to the rescue Friday night in pounding out out a 15-12 win over Fuquay-Varina in a second round game in the N. C. High School Athletic Association's 3-A baseball playoffs.

Led by the home run power of seniors Brandon Godwin, Gerry Grimes and Jon Stancil, the Demons overcame erratic pitching in advancing to the Eastern semifinals at home Tuesday night against Southern Durham, a 5-3 winner over Washington.

Fike (16-6), the Big Eight Conference co-champion and No. I seed, pounded out 18 hits and needed them all to offset a combined mound effort which produced six wild pitches and four passed balls.

Fuquay-Varina (17-6), the Five County Conference's champion and No. I seed, fared badly as well, releasing eight wild pitches, including five by losing right-hander Neil Soars in a five-run, sixth-inning rally.

Fike never trailed, although a fifth-inning error allowed the Bengals to eventually score four unearned runs and tie, 8-8. The Golden Demons held leads of 5-1, 84, 13-8 and 15-10.

"It was a struggle," said Golden Demons' head coach Will Flowers. "No lead was safe, because this game had a lot of stuff in it. Sometimes it was ugly; sometimes it was pretty."

Fike's decisive rally started with center fielder Brent Bissette walking, advancing to second on a wild pitch and scoring on Godwin's fourth hit, a single to center.

Soars, who had come on in relief of right-handed reliever Jeremy Cotten, became unglued, unleashing another wild pitch, then surrendering a one-out, two-run homer to left by Stancil. Chris Harrell and senior Justin Toms laced consecutive singles, then proceeded to score as three more of Soars' pitches soared over the head of Bengals' catcher Joe Griffen.

"We certainly hurt ourselves with the wild pitches," Fuquay-Varina head coach Milton Senter said. "But we didn't expect Fike to hit the ball as well as they did tonight. We just didn't have the pitching to get their big guys out."

Stancil was one of Fike's biggest guys, enjoying a 4-for4 night with four RBL Godwin, who belted a three-run homer in the third inning, also went 4-for4 for the Golden Demons, who equaled their fartherest advance in the playoffs at the 3-A level.

Harrell, freshman Brock Godwin and Bissette added two hits each for the Golden Demons.

The surge left the Golden Demons with a 13-8 lead, and the Bengals never came closer than three afterward, much to Senter's disappointment.

"We kept coming and coming at them (Golden Demons)," he said. "But we could never come far enough. I thought we had turned the corner when we tied the game in the fifth, but they got that big rally in the sixth, and there we

See Fike, page 2B

Fike.....15
Fuquay-Varina.....12

FIKE	AB	R	H	BI	FUQUAY-VARINA	AB	R	H	BI
Mason, dh	5	0	0	0	Carroll, 2b	2	2	1	0
Wilson. 2b	0	0	0	0	Faucette, lf	5	0	3	2
Davis, p	0	0	0	0	Cotten, 3b-p2	1	1	1	
Bissette, cf	4	2	2	2	Ryan, 1b-p	3	1	1	0
Bass, rf	0	0	0	0	Soars, p	1	0	0	0
B.Gdwn,rf-p	4	4	2		Smith, p-3b	3	2	0	0
Grimes, 1b	5	3	2	2	Ellis, ss	5	0	2	5
Stancil, c	4	2	4	4	Matthews, rf	5	1	2	1
Harrell. 3b	5	1	2	2	Walton, C	0	0	0	0
Toms, lf	5	1	1	0	Griffen, c	4	1	1	0
Bk.Gdwn, ss	4	2	2	0	Evans, p	0	0	0	0
Eldrdge,p-2b	3	0	1	0	Stphnson, cf	2	0	0	0
					King, ph	1	1	0	0
Totals	39	15	18	10	Totals	33	12	11	9

Score by innings:
Fike ..... .302 125 2 — 15
Fuquay-Varina .. .103 042 2 — 12

E—Cotten, Ryan, Grimes. DP—Fike 1, Fuquay-Varina 1. LOB—Fike 6, Fuquay-Varina 11. 2B—Matthews, Ellis. HR—Bn Godwin, Ellis, Stancil, Grimes, Matthews. SB—Ryan, Eldredge, Stephenson 2, Carroll. SF—Eldredge.

Pitching	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Eldredge	4	7	5	4	5	4
Davis (W, 5-2)	1	1	3	0	3	2
Godwin	2	4	4	3	4	2
Smith	21/3	5	5	5	0	0
Cotten	21/3	6	3	2	1	1
Soars (L. 1-3)	1	5	5	5	1	1
Ryan	11/3	2	2	2	1	3

WP-Smith, Eldredge, Cotten 2, Davis 2, Soars 5, Bn. Godwin 3, Ryan . PB-Stancil 4.



Southern Nash's Felicia Harris runs a leg of the state championship 800-meter relaV.

(Photos by Grant Roberson)

SN girls take 2nd

From staff reports

RALEIGH — Led by a championship performance from the 800-meter relay team, Southern Nash finished the N.C. High School Athletic Association Class 3-A girls track runner-up for the second straight year on N C. State University's Paul Derr Track Friday.

TC. Roberson was again the state champion with 66 points, followed by the Ladybirds of coach Brian Foster with 58. Going into the 1,600-meter relay, the final event, Southern Nash could have shared the title by finishing three positions ahead of Roberson.

Tresha Hunter, Meka Battle, Felicia Harris and Thomasina Parker comprised the Ladybirds' 800 relay that posted a first-place time of one minute, 42.2 seconds.

Fike also claimed a state champion in junior Tiffany Smith, who scorched the 300-meter intermediate hurdles field with a time of 44.87.

A detailed report of the girls' championship meet will appear in Monday's Daily Times sports section.



Fike's Tiffany Smith leaps over a hurdle in the 300-meter finals. Smith won the title.



Hunt pitcher Jessica Tedder struck out IO.

(Photo by Tom Ham)

Lady Warriors oust Bertie, 3-2

By Tom Ham
Executive Sports Editor

WINDSOR — Hunt returned to the scene of its poorest 1998 outing to turn in one of its sharpest performances on a gorgeous Friday afternoon.

The effort was enough to boost the Lady Warriors of head coach Teresa Allen into the third round of the N.C. High School Athletic Association Class 3-A fast-pitch softball playoffs for the first time in the 20-year history of the softball program with a 3-2 squeaker over Big Eight Conference rival Bertie.

Hunt, 15-3 and victorious in 15 of its last 16 games, conquered the Lady Falcons for the second time in three meetings this season in reaching the Eastern semifinals on the road Tuesday at 7 p.m. against Charles B. Aycock, a 6-2 winner in eight innings over Washington Friday. The Lady Warriors and Bertie, which concluded 14-6, deadlocked for second place in the regular season.

The Lady Warriors, the Big Eight's No. 2 seed, constructed a 3-0 lead and withstood a Bertie bunting spree in the sixth inning.

The Lady Falcons, making their first fast-pitch playoffs appearance and qualifying for the softball postseason for the first time in seven years, did not resort to the bunt in

See Hunt, page 3B

Inside...

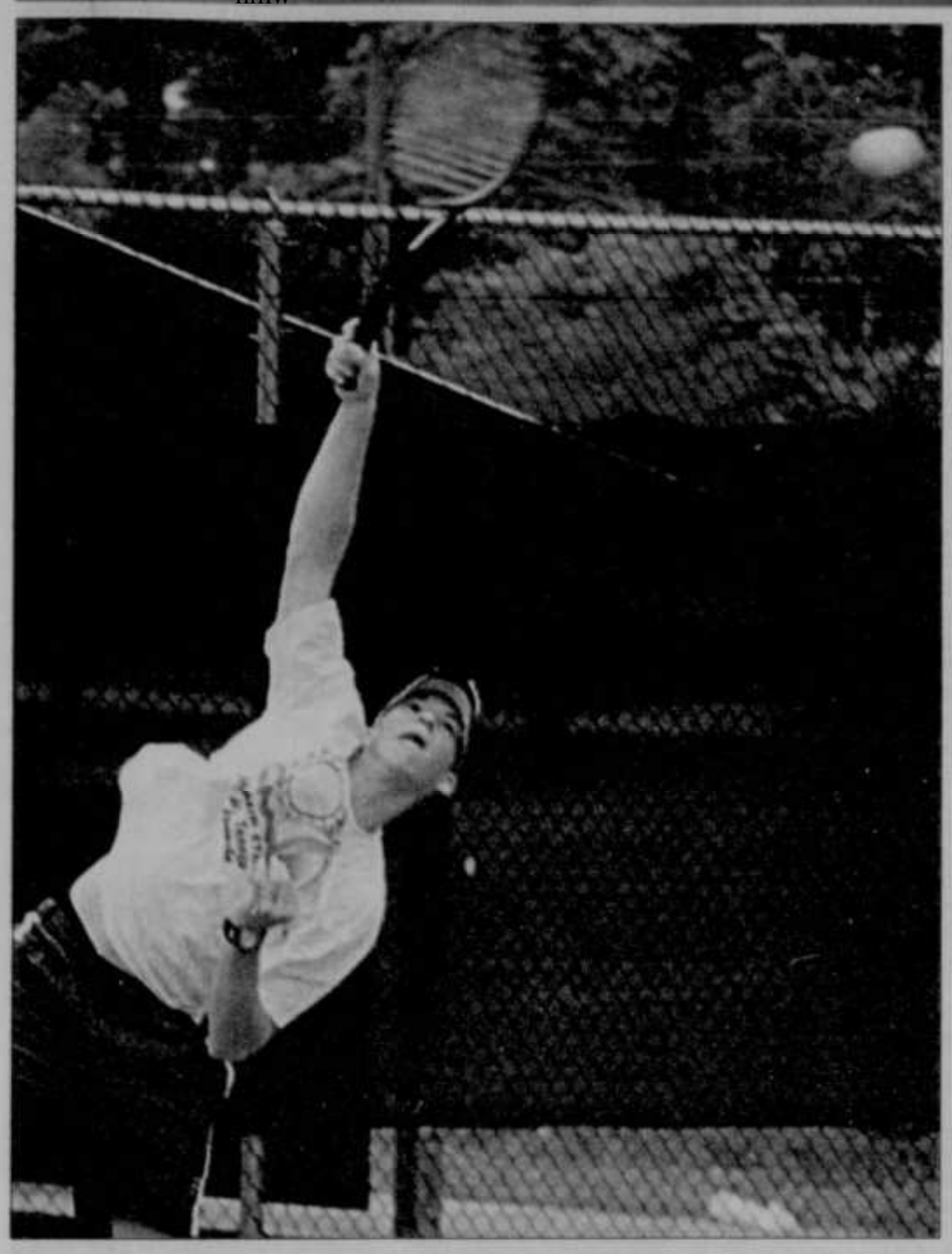
C.B, Aycock triumphs over Washington, 6-2, in 3-A softball.....2B.

Greenfield advances to the NCISAA girls soccer championship with a win over Carolina Day.....2B.

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The Wilson Daily Times Sports

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Fike's Whitaker Askew smashes a shot during his championship victory Saturday afternoon. (Photo by Jay Mumford)

Askew grabs crown

Fike jjunior beats No. I seed to win regional

By Jay Mumford
Daily Times Staff Writer

Fike's Whitaker Askew had two dilemmas Saturday afternoon.

His first one would be whether he would have the stamina to play three singles matches in one day in the N. C. High School Athletic Association's Class 3- A Eastern Regional boys tennis tournament.

The junior's second dilemma was where to put the wall chart, signifying his march to the championship, punctuated by a 7-6 (7-5), 6-4 victory over top-seeded junior Henrik Teiwik of White Oak, an exchange student from Limoping, Sweden.

Beddingfield's No. I doubles team of Lee Vaughn-Beaty Bass failed to match the No. 2-seeded Askew's title accomplishment, falling 6-2, 6-1 in the finals to Washington's top-seeded duo of Vinnie Maurizzio-David Cook. Vaughn-Bass entered the tournament as the No. 2 seed.

The semifinalists in singles and doubles advanced to the NCHSAA 3-A championship at the Burlington Recreation Tennis Center Friday and Saturday.

"I wasn't worried about playing three matches in one day," said Askew, who occupies the No. I position on the Golden Demons ladder. "Coming into the finals, I didn't feel tired. I felt like I was in pretty good shape."

The final five games were a testament to Askew's efforts. Hampered by cramping muscles, he staved off a rally by Teiwik, taking momentary breaks betweem points to attempt to stretch his legs in order to continue.

Teiwik couldn't take full advantage of Askew's physical problems, however, despite closing within 5-4 after falling behind 4-0.

He said Askew's tenacity was a major contributor to the outcome.

"He's a great player," Teiwik said. "The players in my conference (Coastal) would hit the ball maybe two or three times, and give up on a point. He hit the ball hard, kept it in play and kept me running.

"It was very tiring."

After routing Washington's Marcus Jones. 6-0, 6-0 in the quarterfinals and Southern Nash's fourth-seeded Braxton Patterson, 6-1, 6-1 in the semis, Askew dominated Teiwik, who entered the match with a 21-0 record.

Askew mixed crisp down-the-line and cross-court forehand volleys to build a 5-2 first-set lead, but Teiwik stormed back to take a 6-5 advantage.

"I ws getting a little concerned when he started to come back," Askew said. "But I didn't want to second-guess myself, because, when you do that, you penalize yourself by losing your focus.

"But I was real concerned when he took the 6-5 lead. Somehow7I managed to break his serve and force the tiebreaker."

The undefeated Askew (17-0) forged a 6-2 lead in the tiebreaker then held on to win the set.

The second set began as a carbon-copy of the first, with Askew racing to a 4-0 led, capitalizing on what he said was a weak backhand attack by Teiwik

Teiwik battled back again, but there would be no tiebreaker this time.

"It was same old. same old," Askew said "But I wasn't about to let him come back all the way again."

"I lost concentration in the first parts of both sets," Teiwik said. "Ifs very hard to come back from those deficits and have a shot at winning."

Vaughn-Bass rallied from a one-set deficit to win the semifinal encounter

See Askew, page 2B

3-A results

N. C. HIGH SCHOOL ATHELTIC ASSOCIATION
Class 3-A
EASTERN REGIONAL
Tennis Tournament
(on Wilson Rec. Courts)

SINGLES
Quarterfinals

(No. 3 seed) Jeremy Jones (Kinston) d Anil Vernia (Fike), 6-2, 6-4; (No. 2) Whitaker Askew (Fike) d. Marcus Jones (Washington), 6-0, 6-0

SEMIFINALS

(No. 1) Henrik Teiwik (White Oak) d. J. Jones, 6-0, 7-5; Askew d. (No. 4) Braxton Patterson (Southern Nash), 6-1. 6-1.

FINALS

Askew d. Teiwik, 7-6 (7-5), 6-4

DOUBLES
SEMIFINALS

(No. 1) Vinnie Murizzio-David Cook (Washington) d. Brent Bennent-John Parker (Manteo). 6-4. 6-3; (No. 2) Lee Vaughn-Beaty Bass (Beddingfieid) d. (No. 4) Jason McDaniel-Robert Strickland (North Lenoir), 1-6, 6-3, 6-4.

FINALS

Maurizzio-Cook d. Vaughn-Bass, 6-2, 6-1.

Fike makes best of second chance

Golden Demons rides bats, Davis' arm to Big Eight top seed

By Phil Goble Jr.
Daily Times Sports Editor

Fike High missed an opportunity to sew up the Class 3-A Big Eight Conference regular-season title when it slipped at archrival Hunt two weeks ago.

Saturday night, the Golden Demons did not let a second chance get away.

Behind an eight-hit offensive and the pitching of right hander David Davis, the Golden Demons wrapped up the league's top seed in the N.C. High School Athletic Association playoffs with a 4-0 victory over the visiting Warriors.

The contest became necessary when both finished the Big Eight tied for first with 10-4 worksheets.

The co-champions get home games in the first round Tuesday night — Fike entertains Durham Hillside while Hunt welcomes Southern Durham. Both games are set for 7 p.m.

"We should have won over at Hunt," said Fike senior second baseman Matt Eldredge. "We felt we shouldn't have had to play this game tonight."

But play they did — in every aspect of the game.

In the field, Davis was king of the hill. Using a fastball and curveball, the junior befuddled Hunt batters most of the night, striking out nine while walking just three. He hit one batter.

"He's got a good curveball and a good fastball and he blended them well tonight," said Fike head coach Will Flowers, whose team improved to 14-6 overall.

The Warriors had both their hits in the first inning and had their biggest threat in the second, when they loaded the bases.

That, however, was all the offense Hunt could muster.

Davis worked out of the bases loaded jam with a strikeout — an out that started a string of 12 straight.

Hunt got runners on in the final two innings due to errors and walks.

"I only threw two pitches — fastball and curveball," said Davis, who improved to 4-2. "I was mixing it up well to their good hitters. We've been talking about it (rematch) since we lost over there. They (Demons) were pumped up when we got here, so I knew we had a good chance."

The chance got even better when Fike came to the plate.

Despite hitting into three double plays, the Demons rapped eight hits and benefited from four Hunt errors.

Senior first baseman Gerry Grimes opened the second with a double, went to third on a single by junior catcher John Stancil and scored when Hunt left fielder Blake Weller over ran the ball.

Eldredge scored the second run in the second inning, singling, then moving to second on an errant pick-off attempt and scoring on an infield error on a grounder from senior right fielder Brandon Godwin.

Junior center fielder Brent Bissette earned theonly RBI — slapping a double to left- center field that scored Eldredge in the fifth inning.

Fike's final run came in the sixth on two singles and a two-out error.

"As far as our team, it's good to see them step up and play that way (hard)," said Flowers. "It shows the coach they care."

Eldredge and Grimes each wound up 2-for-3 with two runs scored while Bissette wound up 2-for-2.

Cedric Williams suffered the pitching loss for Hunt, falling to 2-1 after striking out one and walking one in six innings.

"We made too many errors and had too many strikeouts," said Hunt head coach Stevie Hinnant, whose team dipped to 13-6. "We were making the kid look good on his off-speed pitches. Don't get me wrong, he was mixing it up well, but we were trying to hit it out of the park instead of just going to the right side like we've been doing.

"But. we're going to the playoffs; we're co-champions and that's all I care about."

pjke 4
Fike 4
Hunt 0

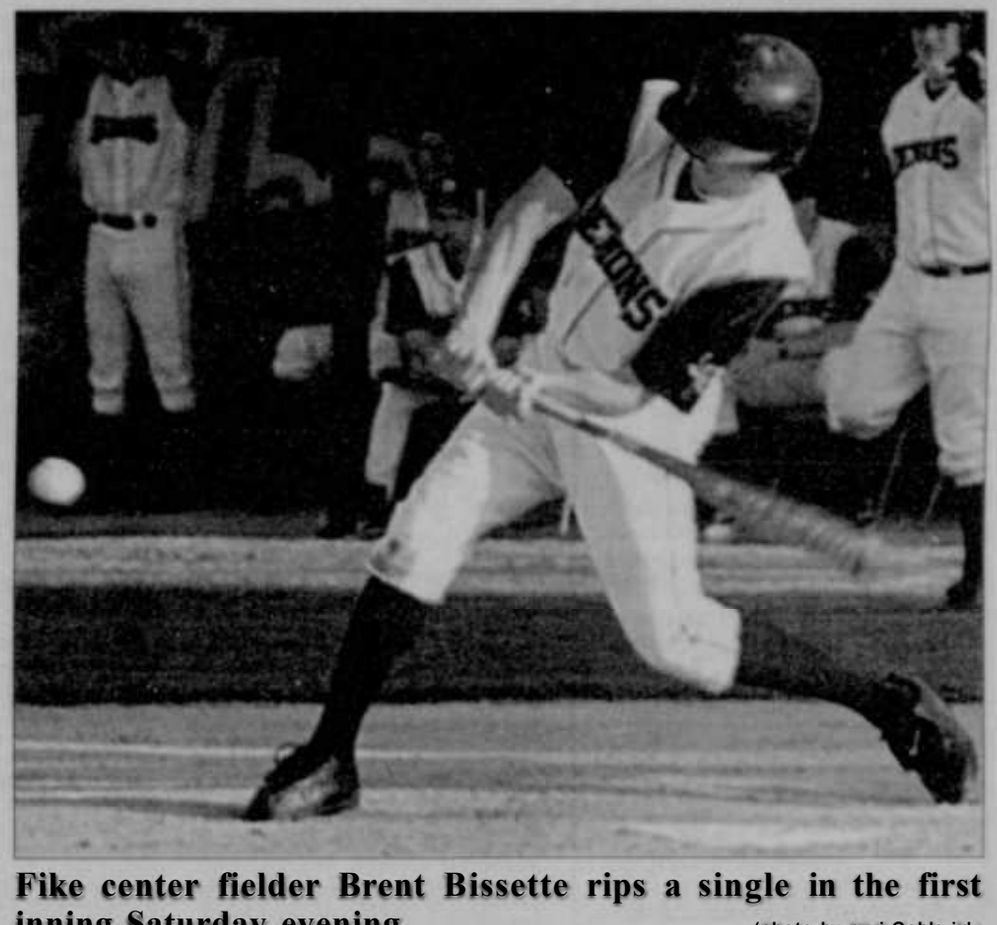
HUNT	AB	R	H	BI	FIKE	AB	R	HBI
High, 2b	4	0	1	0	Home,lf	2	0	0 0
Boswell, ss	4	0	1	0	Bissette.cf	2	0	2 1
Daniels. 3b	3	0	0	0	Bra.G'win,rf	3	0	0 0
Tant, 1b	2	0	0	0	Grimes, 1b	3	2	2 0
Skinner, dh	3	0	0	0	Stancil, c	3	0	1 0
Williams, p	2	0	0	0	Harrell, 3b	3	0	1 0
Weller, lf	2	0	0	0	Toms, dh	2	0	0 0
Ballance.c	3	0	0	0	Bro.G'wn,ss	2	0	0 0
Langston,cf	2	0	0	0	Mason, ph	1	0	0 0
					Eld'dge.2b	3	2	2 0
Totals	25	0	2	0	Totals	24	4	8 1

Score by innings:
Hunt ..... 000 000 0 — 0
Fike ..... 011 011 x — 4

E—Weller, Williams, High. Boswell, Eldredge LOB—Hunt 8, Fike 7. DP—Hunt 3. 2B-Boswell, Grimes. Weller. S—Horne

Pitching	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Williams (L, 2-1)	6	8	4	1	1	1
Davis (W, 4-2)	7	2	0	0	3	9

HBP-Langston (by Davis), Bissette (by Williams).
T-1:41 A-300.



Fike center fielder Brent Bissette rips a single in the first inning Saturday evening. (photo by pwi Goble jd

Southern sweeps track regional



Southern Nash senior DeMaryland Cooper soared-to the high jump championship with a leap of 6-feet-10. (Photo by Scott Jones)

Boys catch field unprepared

By Scott Jones
Daily Times Staff Writer

STANHOPE — Maybe now that the state track meet is on the horizon, Southern Nash will finally be able to find some competition.

In a scene so repetitive that it now almost borders on monotony, Southern Nash's boys track team has followed the same formula for success all season long: show up, find the competition unprepared for the impending onslaught, and race to victory by a ridiculous margin.

Such was the case Saturday afternoon as the host Firebirds blitzed the Class 3-A Eastern Regional field in preparation for what Southern hopes will be the school's first-ever N.C. High School Athletic Association track championship Friday at N.C. State's Paul Derr Track Complex.

If numbers count, Southern will posses a decided advantage in its championship quest. The Firebirds are qualified to compete in a gaudy 16 of the 18 events, with the 100- and 400-meter dashes being Southern's only non-qualifiers. The top four finishers in each event qualified for the state meet. All six area members of the Big Eight, with Fike, Hunt, Beddingfieid, Southwest Edgecombe, and Charles B. Aycock joining the Firebirds, will be represented at the state meet. Pike will have the area's second largest contingent as the Golden Demons are qualified in six events.

Such domination equaled 171 team points for the Firebirds Saturday, a total that decimated runner-

See Firebirds, page 2B

Ladybirds crush foes again

By Scott Jones
Daily times Staff Writer

STANHOPE — the season has already been ultra successful, but Southern Nash's girls track team has competed all season with a sense that it had some unfinished business to handle. The opportunity is now a week away.

The Ladybirds came close last year to experiencing the ultimate in prep competition — a state championship. Southern finished 14 points behind TC. Roberson, taking home the silver runner-up plaque. All season long the Ladybirds have pointed towards bringing home the gold first-place plaque. If Saturday's N.C. High School Athletic Association Class 3-A Eastern Regional, held at Southern Nash, is a true indicator, the Ladybirds are definitely poised for a championship run.

Southern, as has been the case all year, outclassed the competition in romping to 170 team points, easily outdistancing runner-up Fike's 78. Thanks to a strong showing in the field events, the Ladybirds needed just seven events to amass a point total high enough to win the meet. Southern had 70 points coming out of the field, and Tish Pope's third place finish in the 100-meter low hurdles effectively sealed the outcome, giving Southern 82 points.

However, Southern's success was not limited to the field. The Ladybirds qualified in a staggering total of 16 of the 17 state championship events that will be contested Friday at N.C. State's Paul Derr

See Ladybirds, page 2B



Fike's Calin Burkett en route to one of her three victories. (Photo by Scott Jones)

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Jackets add two titles

By Jay Mumford
Daily Times Staff Writer

The staple of Roanoke Rapids' proud tennis tradition has been the play of its doubles teams.

Saturday afternoon at the Barton College Tennis Complex, the Yellow Jackets continued to build on the program's rich heritage by adding the N. C. High School Athletic Association's 2-A Eastern Regional boy's tennis singles and doubles championships.

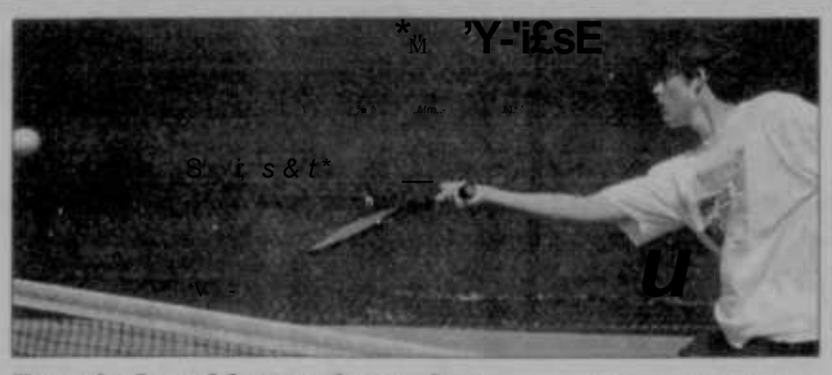
The Yellow Jackets placed both of its doubles teams in the finals, doing so at the expense of Eastern Plains Conference member Greene Central, which held the top two tournament seeds.

The Rams' No. 2-seeded team of Lance Miller-Ken Morgan dropped a 6-1, 6-2 decision to eventual tournament champions Philip Artmann-Adam Swecker; while No. I seeds Steven West-David Monroe dropped a three-set, 6-1, 2-6, 6-3 marathon to Will Spears-Brad Young.

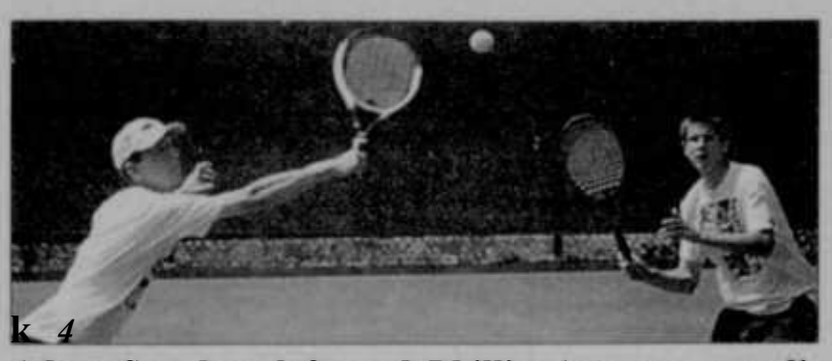
Artmann-Swecker defeated Spears-Young, 6-2, 6-4 for the title.

All four teams, as well as the individuals who reached the semi-finals of the singles event, into the NCHSAA 2-A state championship tournament, which begins Friday at N. C. State University.

Claiming the singles championship was the Yellow Jackets' top-seeded Dennis Lerchl, who ripped Northern Vance's fourth-seeded Spencer Delbridge, 6-0, 6-0 in the finals. So overpowering was Lerchl, that two consecutive games lasted a combined time of one minute, 45 seconds.



Dennis Lerchl smacks a shot. (Photos by Jay Mumford)



Adam Swecker, left, and Phillip Artmann coordinate in doubles.

2-A results

N. C. HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
Class 2-A
EASTERN REGIONAL
Tennis Tournament
(on Barton College Courts)

SINGLES
Semifinals

(No. 1 seed) Dennis Lerchl (Roanoke Rapids) d. Adam Fields (Warren County), 6-2, 6-0; (No. 4) Spencer Delbridge (Northern Vance) d. (No. 2) Jay Carraway (Swansboro), 6-0, 6-0

Finals

Lerchl d. Delbridge, 6-0, 6-0.

DOUBLES
Semifinals

Will Spears-Brad Young (Roanoke Rapids) d. (No 1) Steven West-David Monroe (Greene Central). 6-1, 2-6, 6-3. (No. 4) Phillip Artmann-Adam Swecker (Roanoke Rapids) d. (No 2) David-Ken Morgan (Greene Central). 6-1, 6-2.

Finals

Artmann-Swecker d. Spears-Young, 6-2, 6-4.

Lerchl, a junior and an exchange student from Germany, improved to 19-0 for the season. He defeated Warren County's Adam Fields 6-2, 6-0 in the semis, while Delbridge dispatched Swansboro's No. 2-seed Jay Carraway, 6-6, 6-0. Lerchl dropped but two games in four matches.

Artmann-Swecker improved to 16-1, while Spears-Young stand 14-2. Carraway is 15-5. West-Monroe go into the state tournament with a 7-1 record,while Miller-Morgan advances at 6-2.

Damsels rule GPIC tourney

Greenfield blanks Hale High, 5-0

By Tom Ham
Executive Sports Editor

ROCKY MOUNT —State qualifiers had best not underestimate Greenfield's chances of repeating as the N.C. Independent Schools Athletic Association 1A girls soccer champion.

The Damsels of head coach Ben Forbes sent a warning on Rocky Mount Academy turf Saturday afternoon, blanking Coastal Plains Independents Conference regular-season champion Hale High of Raleigh, 5-0, to seize the tournament crown.

Junior Cindy Tetterton, proclaimed the tournament's Most Valuable Player, not only defused dynamite Hale eighth-grader Katherine Kelley, the CPIC Player of the Year, but recorded a hat trick (three goals) as Greenfield avenged its only regular-season CPIC loss and boosted seedings hopes for this week's state tournament.

Amy Sullivan, also a junior, knocked in the other two goals as the Damsels rocketed to a 2-0 halftime lead and then dominated deflated Hale (14-2).

Tetterton's primary responsibility was to mark Kelley, who has wrecked the Damsels in Hale's 3-2 regular-season triumph.

"When we played them the first time, we were not marking No. 8 (Kelley)," Tetterton said. "Forbes told me not to leave her _ to be like I was a part of her. She's a great player and she's their playmaker. Everything they do offensively starts with her. We knew we had to shut her down."

Kelley did not get off a shot until Tetterton and the Greenfield (12-8) starters had departed.



Greenfield's Lauren Forbes, left, contests Hale's Elizabeth Rendleman for possession. (Photo by Tom Ham)

Forbes lauded Tetterton for being smart enough to know when to abandon Kelley and become involved in the Greenfield offense.

"She did a good job of marking me," Kelley said of Tetterton. "I kind of expected it. They were not ready for us the first time, but, today, they were prepared. It just was not our day."

Tbtterton drilled both first-half goals, with sophomore Claire Smith assisting the first. Greenfield's offense turned to the attack mode once Smith was moved up front. Tetterton's second goal came on a penalty kick with just over three minutes remaining in the first half and she closed the scoring with an unassisted goal.

"I just happened to be there," Tetterton said of her goals. "Claire gave me a really nice square at the goal on the first one. Then I got lucky and got a penalty kick. On the last one, I saw the ball coming and just, went for it."

In between, Sullivan converted assists from freshman Elizabeth Bischoff and Tetterton.

Sophomore Rhia Aycock sparkled in goal with five saves and senior Lauren Forbes, wearing the scars of physical tournament play, and freshman Gretchen Barber turned in stellar performances.

Tetterton was joined on the all-tournament team by teammates Barber, Sullivan, Forbes and Aycock. Tetterton, Sullivan, Smith and Forbes were each named all-conference, while junior Tiffany Rudolph was accorded honorable mention.

"I'm happy," Tetterton said of being the tourney MVP. "But I knew we didn't have the Player of the Year and I just wanted somebody from Greenfield to get it (tourney MYP)."

Askew leads state qualifying contingent

(Continued from page one)

against fourth-seeded Jason McDaniel-Robert Strickland of North Lenoir, 1-6, 6-3, 6-4. Vaughn raced across the court to make a lunging return, which whistled past a ducking Bass and over the net to set up match point.

"I just ran as hard as I could and got it back over," Vaughn said. "Our last two sets were a lot better than the first. It was very ugly."

The Bruins' duo said they were able to get their ground strokes down in the final two sets, which wasn't working for them at the outset of the match.

However, nothing worked well for them in the finals, while Maurizzio-Cook performed like a well-oiled machine in racing to the championship.

"We used a lot of aggressive play at the net," Maurizzio said. "Last night's (Friday) (quarterfinal against Beddingfield's John Green-Jeff Bryant) was our toughest match of the tournament. Today was a lot of fun."

Firebirds rule regional roost

(Continued from page one)

up Coastal conference representative Washington's 60. Southern's fellow Big Eight conference member Fike was third with 48 points. The meet was comprised of the Big Eight and Coastal conferences, plus Northeastern-Albermarle misfit Manteo. The Redskins are the only 3-A member of the Northeastern-Albermarle conference.

As the score indicated, Southern found the competition lacking. As a matter of fact, the Firebirds had enough team points (68) after the first five field events were in the books. However, the final field event, the high jump, provided the day's best competition, and a Firebird rose to the task there as well.

Southern senior DeMaryland Cooper, a Western Carolina signee, wowed a gathering that grew with each raising of the high jump bar by clearing a school-record six feet, IO inches. The competition Cooper faced was familiar — Hunt's Mark Strickland and Beddingfield's Brian Blount, each of whom cleared 6-8. The trio has switched off big-meet titles all season, with Blount taking the Wilson Daily Times Track Classic title and Strickland claiming top honors in the Big Eight conference meet. Cooper made two attempts at seven feet before passing on his final attempt to return to the triple jump competition.

"The high jump today was all motivation," Cooper said. "I didn't make it to the state meet last year, and that really upset me because I knew I should have been there. That pushed me a lot. I knew I could do it (clear 6-10) all along, but it did come as a surprise."

Cooper also posted second-place finishes in the long and triple jumps. He led the long jump until Goldsboro's Travis Coleman topped him by an inch and 3/4 on his final attempt. Cooper's teammate, Julius Peppers, the NCHSAA Male Athlete of the Year, captured the triple jump.

"I'm awestruck," Southern head coach Alton Tyree said of his team's third regional title in the past four years. "These guys never cease to amaze me. We put on some outstanding performances today. We've practiced since Day One with the goal of winning the state championship. We feel really good about next week."

3-A boys results

N.C. HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
Class 3-A
EASTERN REGIONAL
Boys Track Meet
(at Southern Nash High School)

TEAM RESULTS

Southern Nash (SN) 171. Washington (Wj 60, Fike (F) 48, Havelock (Hav) 40, White Oak (WO) 38, Pender County (PC) 36, Charles B. Aycock (CBA) 33. Goldsboro (G) 22, Hunt (H) 22, Beddingfield (B) 22, Kinston (K) 20, Southwest Edgecombe (SWE) 17. Hertford County (HC) 14 North Lenoir (NL) 8, Manteo (M) 5, Bertie (Ber) 1.

SHOT PUT — Burgess (W) 51 feet, 8 1/2 inches; Earp (SN), Howell (PC), Rose (H), Breen (H), Peppers (SN)

DISCUS — Rowell (PC), 162-1; Burgess (W), C. Rogers (SN), Reddick (W), Dickens (SWE), T. Rogers (SN).

LONG JUMP — Coleman (G), 21-11 3/4; Cooper (SN), B. Perry (SN), Langston (B), Dailey (Hav), Carver (M).

TRIPLE JUMP — Peppers (SN), 45-8 3/4; Cooper (SN), Atkinson (F), Foster (F), Perry (SN), Carver (M).

HIGH JUMP — Cooper (SN), 6-10; Strickland (H). Blount (B). Joyner (B), Bowen (W), Coleman (G), Bass (Ber)

POLE VAULT — Howard (SN). 11-6; Butler (CBA), Winstead (SN). Corbitt (CBA), Thomas (SN), Archbell (M).

3,200 RELAY — Southern Nash (Keen, Daniels, McGarvey, Evernham), eight minutes, 33.4 seconds; White Oak, Havelock, Hertford Co., Beddingfield, C B. Aycock.

110 HURDLES — A. Deans (SN), 14.4; Richardson (SWE), Gibbs (W), Dunn (CBA), Joyner (SN), Smith (SN).

100 — Hardy (K), 10.5; Macklin (F), Phelps (Hav), Musgrave (G), Dailey (Hav), Hardy (NL).

800 RELAY — Southern Nash (Gary, Jones, High, Deans), 1:28.3; Fike. Pender Co., North Lenoir, Washington, Goldsboro.

1.600 — Mollahar. (WO). 4:42 4; Hubbard (CBA), McGarvey (SN), Long (H), Roseboro (NL), R Perry (SN)

400 RELAY — Southern Nash (Gary, Jones Peppers, High), 42.7; Fike. Goldsboro, Havelock, Kinston. North Lenoir.

400 — Bowen (W), 50.8; Wells (F), Boney (PC) McKinney (SWE), Ward (K), R Deans (SN).

300 HURDLES — Gibbs (W), 39.7; Gary (SN), Deans (SN), Butcher (H), Matthews (F), Willis (M).

800 — Bell (Hav), 2:02.8; McNeil (HC), Williams (B), Evernham (SN), Valentine (HC), Dupree (SWE).

200 — Gentry (WO), 22.0; High (SN), Hardy (K), Phelps (Hav), Dailey (Hav), Bowen (W)

3.200 — Mollahan (WO), 10:37.2; Hubbard (CBA), McGarvey (SN). Mucci (Hav), White (W). Waters (M).

1.600 RELAY — Southern Nash (Gary, Jones. Peppers, High). 3:26.3; Pender Co., Washington, Fike, Southwest Edgecombe.

Ladybirds get second crown

(Continued from page one)

Track Complex. The only event the Ladybirds did not post a top-four showing (the requirement for advancing to the state meet) was the 100-meter dash.

The Ladybirds will be joined by area rivals and fellow Big Eight conference members Fike, Beddingfield, SouthWest Edgecombe and Charles B. Aycock at the state meet. Hunt was the only area school that failed to post a state qualifier.

"I think it is nice for the girls to be rewarded for their hard work," Southern head coach Brian Foster said. "I think these girls represent themselves well everywhere, not just on the track. It's good to see people like that win."

Southern posted just two individual wins, but Ladybirds were omnipresent in the second, third, and fourth places slots. Junior Kineta Williams captured the shot put competition, and sophomore Meka Battle soared past teammate Felecia Harris in the triple jump to give Southern its individual wins. Harris and Battle finished second and third, respectively, in the long jump. Havelock's Christia Wallace sailed 16 feet, IO 1/2 inches on her final attempt to edge Harris by a half inch.

The Ladybirds also took wins in three of the four relay races. Fike took top honors in the 3200 relay to prevent the Southern sweep, and sophomore Carin Burkett was a big reason why.

Burkett turned in the day's most impressive individual performance by sweeping the distance events. As well as running the anchor leg on the 3200 relay, Burkett also placed first in the 800-, 1600-, and 3200-meter runs. Any track observer will testify that Burkett pulled off a grueling quartet of victories, Burkett only seemed to get stronger as the day went on. Her margin of victory in the 3200, her last race, was 30 seconds.

"When I first started running, I thought I'd have more competition than I iiad," said Burkett. "I just know that I have to keep everyone behind me. If they are behind me, I know I'm doing good."

Fike junior Tiffany Smith was the only other area competitor to capture a first-place finish. Smith bested Charles B. Aycock junior Stephanie Schmidt by nearly three seconds to take top honors m the 300-meter hurdles.

3-A girls results

N.C. HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
Class 3-A
EASTERN REGIONAL
Girls Track Meet
(at Southern Nash Senior High)

TEAM RESULTS

Southern Nash (SN) 170, Fike (F) 78, Havelock (Hav) 62, Hertford County (HC) 58, Kinston (K) 27, Southwest Edgecombe (SWE) 26, Beddingfield (B) 25, Washington (W) 22, Charles B. Aycock (CBA) 12, North Lenoir (NL) 12, Hunt (H) 9, Manteo (M) 6, Pender County (PC) 4, Bertie (Ber) 3.

SHOT PUT — Williams (SN), 37 feet, 5 1/2 inches; Sessoms (HC), Whitley (SN), McNeil (Hav), Sparrow (NL), Dunston (SN).

DISCUS — Sessoms (HC), 112-10; McNeil (Hav), Sparrow-(NL), Whitley (SN), Dunston (SN), Williams (SN)

LONG JUMP — Wallace (Hav), 16-10 1/2; Harris (SN), Battle (SN), Graham (NL), Burton (SN), Harrell (Ber).

TRIPLE JUMP — Battle (SN), 37-9; Harris (SN), Hinnant (F), Fonville (WO), Williamson (SN), Corrigan (H).

HIGH JUMP — Wallace (Hav), 4-10; Pierce (SN), Foster (SN), Lewis (HC).

3,200 RELAY — Fike (Thomas, Bond, Moore, Burkett), 10 minutes, 37.4 seconds; Beddingfield, Southern Nash, Havelock, Hunt.

100 HURDLES — Burgess (W). 14,8; Smith (F), Pope (SN), Schmidt (CBA), Anderson (K), Dawes (SN).

100 — Burgess (W), 12.4; Williams (K), Picott (HC), Jackson (K), Street (SWE), McNeil (HC).

800 RELAY — Southern Nash (Hunter, Harris. Battle. Parker). 1:44 8; Southwest Edgecombe, Fike, Hertford Co., Havelock, Kinston.

1.600 — Burkett (F), 5:32.4 Bronars (Hav), Newsome (HC), Joyner (SN), McIver (M), Cook (WO).

400 RELAY — Southern Nash (Parker, Pope, Dawes, Hunter), 50.3; Southwest Edgecombe. Hertford Co., Beddingfield, Kinston. White Oak.

400 — Davis (Hav), 1:00.3; Parker (SN), Harris (SN), Hayes (PC), Corrigan (H), Pope (B).

300 HURDLES — Smith (F), 46 3; Schmidt (CBA). Burton (SN), Foster (SN), Joyner (HC), Pope (SN).

SOO — Burkett (F), 2:31.1; Marshburn (SN), Hall (Bedd), Smith (K), Abell (WO), Newsome (HC)

200 — Picott (HC), 26.3; Hunter (SN), Williams (K), Street (SWE), Thompson (H), Burgess (W).

3,200 — Burkett (F), 12:27; Joyner (SN), Bronars (Hav), McIver (M), Flowers (H), Pittman (W).

1.600 RELAY — Southern Nash (Hunter, Pope, Battle. Parker), 4:18.5; Fike. Beddingfield, Southwest Edgecombe, Bertie, White Oak.

Reid, Brown spearhead Greene Central advance

SNOW HILL — Reginald Reid id Alfae Brown paced Greene central's boys track team to a lurth-place finish in the N. C. High School Athletic Associaon's 2-A Eastern Regional at reene Central High School Sat-day afternoon.

Reid earned a pau of berths to the NCHSAA 2-A Championship meet in Charlotte Wednesday with championships in the long and triple jumps. Reid leaped distances of 21 feet, nine inches and 44-6, respectively.

Brown claimed invitations with a first-place effort in the 200-meter dash (22.8 seconds), and a tie for second (10.9) in the IOO meters.

Their respective showings, along with a first-place finish from the 400 -meter relay team and a runner-up effort by Tony Darden in the 400-meter dash garnered the Rams a total of 57 points.

Whiteville took the team championship with 85 points.

The Lady Rams qualified only one individual (top four finishers are state bound). Freshman Amette Pridgen placed fourth in the shot put. The Lady Rams' 800-meter relay team placed second to advance to Wednesday's meet.

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THE WILSON DAILY TIMES

Sports



Southern Nash three-sport standout Julius Peppers, left, accepts his award from former NCHSAA board member Ronald Chavis, center, and Que Tucker. (Photo by Phil Goble JD

Peppers named top male athlete

By Phil Goble Jr.
Daily Times Sports Editor

CHAPEL HILL — For the past four years, Southern Nash three-sport star Julius Peppers has won nearly every award he could think of — All-Class 3-A Big Eight Conference in football and basketball; Wilson Daily Times all-area in football and basketball; Firebird f(x)tball and basketball MYP; Parade football All-American.

Thursday afternoon inthe Dean Smith Center, Peppers won one he did not know existed — and it may have been one of the sweetest.

In front of a crowd of nearly 300 coaches, athletics directors and adminLstrators, the 6-foot-7, 250-pound Peppers was named the 1998 N.C. High School Athletic Association's Male Athlete of the Year.

The award, presented at the NCHSAA's annual meeting, is in its 13th year and has been bestowed upon such athletes as Robert Siler of Jordan Matthews (1986-87), CTiester McGlockton of Whiteville (1987-88), Rusty LaRue of Northwest Guilford (1991-92), Na Brown of Reidsville (1994-95) and Tyrell Godwin of East Bladen (1996-97).

"I found out about it last week," said Peppers, accompanied to the ceremony by coaches Ray Davis and Brian Foster as well as a small army of family members. "I didn't even know they had one. I don't think it's sunk in yet."

Peppers was chosen from more than 120,000 athletes that complete in 22 NCHSAA-sanctioned events across the state The final field for the Pat Best Memorial Award was narrowed to eight, according to NCHSAA Associate Executive Director Rick Strunk.

Receiving the Female Athlete of the Year award was Clifeteana McKiver of East Duplin High School. McKiver excelled in volleyball, basketball and track for the Lady Panthers of the 2-A East Central Conference. The two-time ECC Player of the Year led East Duplin's basketball team to a 29-0 record and the state 2-A title this year, finishing her career with 1,924 points, 1,330 rebounds and 555 blocked shots,

Peppers' basketball numbers were nearly identical — more than 1,600 career points, 1,000 rebounds and more than 500 assists!

See Peppers, page 3B

Championship day in the Big Eight

Pike, Hunt share soccey baseball titles; C.B. Aycock claims softball crown



Pike senior Stacey Radford (18) kicks ball as Hunt freshman Sara Beth Cox defends Thursday at Pike. (Photo by Scott Jones)

Demons tie for title with 1-0 decision

By Scott Jones
Daily Times Staff Writer

A few youthful Fike fans pointed towards the scoreboard and gave Hunt senior soccer player Camille Harrison a bit of a razzing as she walked down the sideline Thursday night, to which she replied, "It ain't over."

In a way she was right, but not on this night.

With Fike leading 1-0 with six minutes and 30 seconds left. Harrison and the rest of the visiting Lady Warriors thought they were headed to their bus to wait for some still-distant bad weather to pass. However, 20 minutes later, the officials ended the game because of lightning, and the Lady Golden Demons broke into a celebratory frenzy when they learned their upset of the state No. 4-ranked Lady Warriors was official.

The controversial outcome left the two tied atop the Big Eight Conference standings at IM — and co-champions. Fike, now 14-1-1 overall, travels to Hunt, 15-2, Wednesday night at 7 for a game to decide which team earns the Big Eight's No. I seed in the upcoming N. C. High School Athletic Association Class 3-A playoffs. Hunt won a coin toss prior to last night's game to earn the right to be the home team.

So, as Harrison said, it ain't over yet.

But Thursday's game is definitely history, and a happy bit of history it is for the Lady Demons. Fike freshman Kelly Reid scored on a breakaway seven minutes into the second half, then the Golden Demons defense, anchored by junior Elizabeth Spencer and senior Stacy Radford, combined with the weather to hold Hunt scoreless for the first time in league play since Fike accomplished the feat in 1995.

As the played developed, Reid's gem did not immediately have the look of a Golden Demons goal. Fike freshman Jamie Crocker won a loose ball just on Fike's side of midfield and booted the ball long tow'ards Hunt's goal, apparently to no one in particular. However, Reid quickly emerged with a burst of speed, controlled the ball, and looked goalward. A Hunt defender moved in, but Reid stopped and drilled the ball into the right portion of the goal

See Demons, page 2B

Warriors top SN to share crown

By Tom Ham
Executive Sports Editor

Hunt High varsity baseball players barely celebrated Thursday afternoon.

And they had earned every right.

But head coach Stevie Hinnant and his Warriors sensed they had survived a flat performance in seizing a share of the Class 3-A Big Eight Conference championship with archrival Fike by turning back Southern Nash, 7-2, on the Hunt diamond.

Hunt, 13-5, 10-4 in the Big Eight, emerged the co-champion after coming off a disappointing 1997 season. A year ago, the Warriors were projected Big Eight contenders — but finished 4-10 in the league.

"To be the conference co-champion is overwhelmingly good," Hinnant said. "We were very much overlooked at the beginning of the year. To lose seven seniors off a team that went 4-10 in the conference, you've got to be happy with the conference championship.

"I'm thankful we got it done, but I am badly disappointed in the way we got it done. We had no enthusiasm at all."

But Hunt took command with six unearned runs in the second inning against a Firebirds' squad, that in the opinion of head coach Tommy Warrick, was not especiaUy motivated to deprive the Warriors the crown.

"This is the way it has been all year," Warrick said, "it has been a long year."

Southern Nash, a playoffs contender until the final week, exited 10-9, 7-7 in the conference.

Senior shortstop Bert Boswell, who triggered Hunt's big second with a bases-loaded double, echoed his head coach's sentiments.

"I thought we were in a good frame of mind and ready to play before the game," Boswell said. "I don't know what happened. It was like we knew what we had to do to get it (win the championship) done, but we didn't know that we were getting it done.

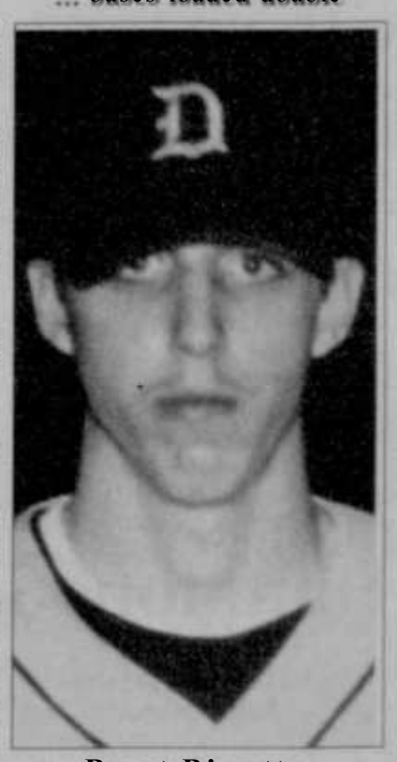
"We didn't have any enthusiasm and didn't play like we are supposed to play. Once we got up six runs, I thought we would have a little more enthusiasm. It never showed. It had better change."

The Warriors struck for the *six* runs after starting Southern Nash junior right-hander Jeremy Hardy (2-2) retired the first two batters in the bottom of the second. Left fielder Blake Weller

See Hunt, page 3B



Bert Boswell
... bases loaded double



Brent Bissette
... 3-for-4 afternoon

Pike enjoys third game with Bruins

By Jay Mumford
Daily Times Staff Writer

For Fike's varsity basebaU team, the third meeting against county and Class 3-A Big Eight Conference rival Beddingfield was extremely charming.

The Golden Demons manufactured a five-run fifth inning rally and went on to secure a 10-7 victory, to claim a share of the conference championship with its other archrival, Hunt.

I^le blasted 15 hits in the win to improve to 13-6, 10-4 Big Eight, while Beddingfield, the 1997 champion and N.C. High School Athletic Association 3-A runner-up, completed its season with marks of 9-10, 7-7 Big Eight.

The (bolden Demons and Hunt, who defeated Southern Nash, 7-2, Thursday afternoon. The Warriors and Golden Demons will collide in a special playoff game on the Fike diamond at 7 p m. Saturday to determine the Big Eight's Nos. I and 2 berths in the N. C. High School Athletic Association 3-A playoffs, scheduled to begin next week.

Fike won the coin flip this morning to determine Saturday's playoff site.

Several "thirds" led to Fike's victory:

• The go-ahead rally in the fifth was the third inning in which the (bolden Demons scored.

• Junior third baseman Chris Harrell provided the go-ahead hit, a two-run double to right. The hit was his third in his third at-bat. The RBIs were Harrell's second and third.

• Senior left fielder Justin Toms followed Harrell's double with a two-run homer to left — on the third fastball he received from losing pitcher Kris BosweU.

But as charming as it was, F'ike's fifth-inning rally almost failed to materialize.

Tied 3-3 entering the bottom of the fifth inning, Fike opened its rally with an infield hit by junior center fielder Brent Bissette. Senior right fielder Brandon (Godwin popped to second, but junior second baseman Erie Pierce allowed the ball to drop to the ground.

He picked up the ball, and threw to second to retire Bissette. Godwin, who seemed to be in a daze, stood watching the developments a few feet before reaching first, but quicldy recovered and beat the relay throw to the bag.

Junior catcher Jonathan Stancil singled for the

See Fike, page 3B

Lady Golden Falcons wrap up first Big Eight title in first year of fast-pitch

Softball

Charles B. Aycock wrapped up sole possession of the top spot, and Hunt settled for a share of second place in the conference and Beddingfield slipped past Fike in high school varsity fast-pitch softball competition Thursday.

CBA tops Big Eight

PINETOPS — In its first year of fast-pitch and in its first year as a member of the Class 3-A Big Eight Conference, Charles B. Aycock captured the league championship, blanking host Southwest Edgecombe, 3-0.

The Lady Golden Falcons of coach Al Yelverton enter the N.C. High School Athletic Association playoffs with an 18-3 record, finishing 12-2 in the Big Eight. SouthWest's season ends at 8-12, 6-8 in the league.

"We are very pleased," Yelverton said of the Lady Falcons topping the Big Eight after shifting from the 2-A East Central Conference. "I think we're shocked. You certainly can't do anything but praise the girls for adapting to the hitting, pitching style and basic rule changes in fast-pitch."

Emily West, a senior right-hander, stopped the Lady Cougars on four hits. West struck out three and walked one.

CBA managed eight hits off losing pitcher Audrey Eason and got a run in each of the first, second and sixth innings.

Kathy McClenny doubled and scored on senior third baseman Stephanie Cannon's single in the first. Senior Jeri Lynn Coker singled arni scored on senior Amanda Bardin's hit in the second. Bardin tripled in Coker in the sixth.

Cannon batted 3-for-3, while Bardin was 2-for-3.

Tile Lady Falcons will play at home in their playoff opener.

Hunt edges Firebirds

STANHOPE - Visiting Hunt claimed the Class 3-A Big Eight Conference's No. 2 spot in the N.C. High School Athletic Association Class 3-A playoffs by outlasting Southern Nash, 10-8 in

See Hunt, page 2B

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Local weekend racing

SNS features Late Model Sportsman 100-lapper

KENLY — An 100-laps Late Model Sportsman race headlines the Spring (lassie 275 auto racing program scheduled at Southern National Speedway Saturday night.

features in all divisions are planned for the first time in four weeks.

The lineup includes features of 75 laps in Late Model Stock, 40 laps in Pro Trucks, 35 laps in Super Stock and 25 laps in Four Cylinder Stock.

The green flag drops for the first feature at 7:30.

SOUTHERN NATIONAL SPEEDWAY
Points standings
(Through races of May 2)

Late Model Stock

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1.Hank Jarman	Kinston	4	172
2. Deac McCaskill	Raleigh	08	164
3. Jamey Caudill	Four Oaks	50	162
4. Jay Crawford	Durham	69	142
5. Marty Ellis	Wilson	11	140
6 David Humphrey	Raleigh	IO	130
7. Cam Strader	Wilson	16	128
8.Billy Ray Lucas	Wilson	0	122
9 Tony Grady	Raleigh	I	116
IO. Jake Yelverton	Selma	6	110

Late Model Sportsman

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1 Randy Renfrow	Raleigh	87	IOO
2. Eddie MassengillGoldsboro		1	99
3. Jim Kelley	Newport	K7	98
4. Shelton McNair	Plymouth	M3	97
5. Barry McCaskill	Wendell	2	96
6. John Jones	Goldsboro	5	95
7 Tony Jackson	Chocowinity	3	94
8. Ricky McKeel	Black Creek	42	93
9. Chris Dunn	Raleigh	14	92
10. Tony Pendley	Chocowinity	4	91

Pro Trucks

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. Pat Patterson	Fuq-Varina	33	192
2. Tom Usry	Broadway	OO	182
3. Ronald Brown	Kinston	24	172
4 Stan Perrine	Raleigh	15	170
5. Linwood Mozingo	Pikeville	22	166
6 Trouble Gray	Fremont	3	162
7. David Warren	Goldsboro	81	150
8 Wayne Skinner	Wilson	31	148
9 Danny VuricannanHolly Spgs		44	146
IO. Danny McDonald	Lillington	17	138

Super Stock

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. Brandon Head	Goldsboro	16	299
2. Allan Head	Goldsboro	32	297
3. Stacey Pate	Pikeville	5	291
4 Ricky Brantley	Zebulon	7	282
5. Ron langley	Elm City	39	281
5. Russell Barbour	Smithfield	73	281
7. Perry Bauer	Clayton	92	290
8. Mack Best	Mount Olive	6	277
9. Stacy Wood	Benson	8	272
10. Sherm Davis Jr.	F'ville	28	268

Four Cylinder Stock

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. Wil Smith	Raleigh	23	300
2. Pat Renfro	Warsaw	13	291
2. Andy Smith	Goldsboro	44	291
4 Roy Creech Jr.	Clayton	16	289
5. Ed Little Jr.	Princeton	24	284
6. Bob Brink	Wendell	50	282
7. R.Schnegelbergr	Raleigh	31	279
8. Tom Justice	Franklinton	74	278
9. Jason O'Brien	Clayton	5	277
10. Gary Poythress	Wilson	12	275
IO. Junior Pearce	Pine Level	8	76
IO. J. R Bryant	Macclesfld.	B3	76

Regular program planned at County Line

ELM CITY —Timed trials to determine starting positions are on the agenda in Saturday night's auto racing program at County Line Raceway.

Heat races are set in the Limited Sportsman, Super Street, Economy Street, Modified Four Cylinder and Stock Four Cylinder divisions.

The lengths of the "Mothers' Day" observance main events will be 40 laps in Late Model Sportsman, 25 laps in Limited Sportsman, 20 in Super Street and Modified Four Cylinder and 15 in Economy Street and Modified Four Cylinder.

Racing begins at 8 p.m.

COUNTY LINE RACEWAY
Points standings
(Through races of May 2)

Late Model Sportsman

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. Jimmy Edwards	Hope Mills	48	142
2. Cy Nelms	Rocky Mt.	37	132
3. Roger Lucas	Benson	79	122
4 Randy Lucas	Apex	15	120
4 Tater Liles	Bailey	L1	120
6. Ervin Rigsbee	Knightdale	R5	114
7. James Batten	Rocky Mt.	21	108
8. Chrlie Stephensn	Raleigh	85	104
9. Neal Sykes	Apex	11	88
10. Jimy Holcombe	Elm City	3	80

Limited Sportsman

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. John Fulghum	Kenly	50	150
2. Bobby Whitley	Rocky Mt.	6	138
3. Bobby Bottoms	Elm City	47	136
4 Al Boykin	Kenly	11	130
5. Spencer Liggon	I^icama	9	128
6 Tom Knghtmger	Rocky Mt.	5	126
7. Dykes Maynard	Raleigh	65	112
8. John Whitley	W'alstonburg	I	106
9 Buddy Garten	New Bern	57	64
9. David Upchurch	Saratoga	05	64

Super Street

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. Jmmy Hndrcks	Btleboro	17	154
2. Steve Messer	Wendell	15	144
3. Scooter King	Rocky Mt.	10	136
4. Mike King	Rocky Mt.	7	118
5. James Cascell	Rocky Mt.	56	110
6. Pat Ferrell	Rocky Mt.	43	108
7. Jay Pender^ass	Rocky Mt	11	102
7. Wade Ferrell	Rocky Mt	42	102
9 Kenneth Corbitt	Rocky Mt.	07	86

Economy Street

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. J. P. Cascell	Battleboro	56	154
2. Mike Wall	Elm City	1	140
3. Jeff Horne		94	134
4. Billy Poythress	Rocky Mt.	31	120
4 Jerry Baker		50	120
6. Bill Dale	Smithfield	79	114
7. Ronald Beichnr	Wilson	88	112
8. Jim Upchurch	Nashville	5	100
9. Mark McKenzie	Sharpsburg	18	94
10. Mike Ridgeway	Sharpsburg	15	92

Modified Four Cylinder

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. Greg Williams	Bailey	03	152
2. Ronnie Johnson	Pine Level	5	144
3. Matthew Barnes	Lucama	87	128
4. Ken Pearce	Bunn	15r	122
4. Lee Brinson	Bailey	15w	122
6. Jimmy Hughes	Creedmoor	13	120
7. Jim Massengill	Wilson	88	114
8. Victor May	Middlesex	I	106
9. Tom Ridgeway	Spring Hope	49	94
IO. Terry Thompson	Smithfield	T2	78

Stock Four Cylinder

Driver	H'town	Car	Pts.
1. Johnny Wood	Nashville	27	180
2. Tom Balance	Bunn	51	176
3. Ricky Webb	Elm City	99-B	154
4. Jim O'Neal	Louisburg	4-Y	150
5. Michael Webb	Elm City	98	144
5. Greg Worley	Wendell	21	144
7. Chet Christman	Rocky Mt.	37	138
7. Kyle Banks	Louisburg	28	138
9. Chris Ellington	Creedmoor	4	136
10. Lee Bailey	Wendell	12	124

Race to benefit Duke Children's Hospital

The Duke Children's Hospital and Health Center or the Duke Children's Miracle Network will benefit from the inaugural Race for the Champions, scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 30, at Southern National Speedway near Kenly.

The plans were announced this week by NASCAR Late Model Stock driver Cam Strader of Wilson and his father, R.B. Strader The endeavor involves Team Wilson, the sponsor of Cam Strader's Thunderbird.

The Late Model Stock drivers in the race will collect donations from fans by passing helmets through the grandstands. In addition, proceeds from designated box-seat tickets will be donated to the Duke Children's Hospital for pediatric health care, basic and applied research, health care education and children's health advocacy.

Bardin's courage saluted by NCHSAA

CHAPEL HILL – May, 1997, is a month Rosalie Bardin will never forget.

Walking away from a softball game her Southern Nash Ladybirds were playing at SouthWest Edgecombe, Bardin was struck by a bolt of lightning.

Just a few feet from the bus, Bardin was jolted backwards and knocked unconscious.

Amazingly, a few days later, she was back at school, getting the team ready for the playoffs.

Bardin's comeback from such a tremendous shock was saluted Thursday afternoon at the Dean Smith Center in front of a crowd of nearly 300 coaches, athletics directors and administrators with an N.C. High School Athletic Association Courage Award

"I got a letter last week saying I was going to be honored, but I didn't know what it was," said Bardin, who admits to staying indoors more when storms begin to swell. "It's great. I've been really blessed."

Blessed not only with life, but with a position as assistant principal at Nash Central Junior High, a job Bardin believes helps her affect more lives than ever.

"I used to think I made a difference in a lot of young athletes' lives," she said. "Now, I think I make a difference in a lot more lives at the middle school level."

But that is not to say her decision to leave Southern Nash Senior and the coaching ranks was easy — Bardin led her 1995 team to the state 3-A slow-pitch softball championship and the 1996 squad finished second in the state fast-pitch softball playoffs.

"It was a tough decision and a good decision," Bardin said. "It was tough to leave the players and kids (at Southern Nash)."

Bardin was one of three recipients of a Courage Award — football and softball coach Walt Davis of Yatesville Northside and soccer coach George Kennedy of Western Guilford were the others.

Davis' award was given after his successful return from a mowing accident that left him impaled on a stake. Kennedy suffered a heart attack- and endured to return to coaching.

The awards were presented to the trio by former world heavyweight boxing champion James "Bonecrusher" Smith.

-- Phil Goble Jr.



Former Southern Nash coach Rosalie Bardin, left, stands with award presenter James "Bonecrusher" Smith Thursday.
Photo by Phil Goble jr>

Peppers honored as best male athlete in state

(Continued from page one)

In football, the running back gained 3,501 yards and scored 38 touchdowns.

A national Junior Olympics long jump finalist in 1996, Peppers competes in the long jump, triple jump, shot put and the 400-meter relay for the Firebirds.

"I'm going to miss it all," said Peppers of his high school days. "Playing in our gym when it was packed — it was a great atmosphere."

Next season, Peppers will bring his talents the to another great atmosphere — the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Julius signed a letter-of-intent to play football for the Tar Heels and expects to see some playing time in the Smith Center on the basketball team as well.

"I think it (college) is going to be a lot of fun," he said.

But for now, the son of George Peppers and Bessie Faye Brinkley was just proud to be honored. Proud not because of the personal glory, but proud because of the reflection the honor brings to Southern Nash and his teammates.

"It's a reflection on our school." said Peppers, who was given his award by NCHSAA Deputy Executive Director Dick Knox, Assistant Executive Director Que Tucker and former NCHSAA board member Ronald Chavis. "There's a lot of people who helped me out — my coaches in football, basketball and track and the players who pushed me to get better."

Not only better, but, at least for 1998, the best in the state.

Lenoir, Southeastern advance

Charles B. Aycock High products B.J. Smith and Noah Edens sparked Lenoir Community College to a 9-7 conquest of the University of South Carolina at Salkehatchie in the opening round of the National Junior College Athletic Association Region X baseball tournament in Fleming Stadium Thursday.

Smith, a freshman third baseman, rapped three hits in four trips and drove in two runs. Edens, a freshman right-hander, was the winning pitcher in relief of starter Jon Smith. In seven innings, Edens scattered six hits, allowed one run, walked two and struck out six.

Shortstop Mike Elswick, a product of Southern Nash, added two hits.

Southeastern Community College outlasted Louisburg, 10-9 in IO innings, in the other opening-round game.

Action was scheduled to resume in Fleming Stadium at IO this morning, with Southeastern opposing Spartanburg (S.C.). Lenoir was scheduled to test Brevard at I.

Losers' bracket games are scheduled for 4 and 7 this evening. The winners' bracket final is set for I p.m. Saturday. The championship series begins at I p.m. Sunday.

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All-Area Football Team 97

Ironman

Player, Team	Pos.	Hgt.	Wgt.	Class
Mark Strickland, Hunt	Back	6-3	225	Senior
Julius Peppers, So. Nash	Back	6-7	247	Senior
Antwane Yelverton, Greene Ct.	Back	6-0	190	Senior
Virgil Parker, Hunt	Back	5-9	215	Senior
Rayvonne Newkirk, Fike	Back	6-0	185	Junior
Kelsie Langston, Beddingfield	Back	6-0	190	Senior
Johnny Aytch, Greene Ctrl.	Line	5-7	170	Senior
Kyle Creech, No. Johnston	Line	6-3	330	Senior
Dominique Lindsay, Beddingfield	Line	6-2	190	Senior
J.T. Windham, Fike	Line	5-10	180	Senior
Adam Pittman, C.B. Aycock	Line	5-10	157	Senior
Terrell Bright, Greene Ctrl.	Line	6-2	225	Senior

Ironman of the Year: Mark Strickland

Offense

Player, Team	Pos.	Hgt.	Wgt.	Class
Jermaine Moore, Greene Ctr.	Back	6-0	157	Senior
Tavarus Redmond, SW Edge.	Back	6-0	200	Junior
Alfae Brown, Greene Ctrl.	Back	5-11	173	Senior
Anc McClennahan, ENCSD	Rec.	6-0	150	Senior
Reginald Reid, Greene Ctrl.	Rec.	6-3	182	Senior
Shaun Breen, Hunt	Line	6-5	300	Senior
Adam Mills, Southern Nash	Line	5-6	200	Senior
Preston Anders, Beddingfield	Line	6-3	255	Senior
Mark Barnes, Hunt	Line	6-3	215	Soph.
Brad Walston, SW Edge.	Line	6-0	210	Junior
Mitch Gay, Greene Ctrl.	Line	6-0	195	Junior
John Hyde, Hunt	Kick.	5-10	165	Junior

Offensive Player of the Year: Mark Strickland

Defense

Player, Team	Pos.	Hgt.	Wgt.	Class
A W. Abbott, Greene Ctrl.	Back	6-1	170	Senior
Ron Harris, Southern Nash	Back	5-9	149	Senior
Antonio Jones, Greene Ctrl.	Back	5-10	160	Junior
William Barnes, Fike	Back	5-9	170	Senior
Chico Deberry, Hunt	LB	5-11	210	Soph.
Mike Marcello, Hunt	LB	5-10	185	Senior
B J. Deans, Hunt	LB	6-1	200	Junior
Trevlan DeVaughn. Bedd.	LB	5-10	215	Senior
Shaun Rose, Hunt	Line	6-6	310	Senior
Chris Wilder, Southern Nash	Line	6-1	280	Junior
Georgic Bullock, SW Edge.	Line	6-1	280	Soph.
Demetrius Blount, Hunt	Line	6-1	220	Senior

Defensive Player of the Year: Shaun Rose

Player of the Year: Mark Strickland, Hunt

Ironman


Peppers


Yelverton


Newkirk


Langston


Parker


Windham


Aytch


Creech


Pittman


Lindsay


Bright

Offense


Moore


Redmond


Brown


McClennahan


Reid


Hyde


Breen


Mills


Gay


M. Barnes


Anders


Walston

Warriors, Rams dominate

Hunt's Strickland and Rose collect more individual accolades

By Daily Times Sports Staff

Hunt, after a losing wake-up call at Hertford County, proceeded to simply dominate the Class 3-A Big Eight Conference varsity football ranks.

The Warriors claimed revenge against Hertford County and were again the last Big Eight team left standing in the N.C. High School Athletic Association Class 3-A playoffs.

A classification lower, Greene Central was the scourge of the Eastern Plains Conference. The Rams' exit in the opening round of the 2-A playoffs was a shocker.

But the dominance of Hunt and Greene Central of the 1997 Wilson Daily Times All-Area lineup comes as no shock.

The Warriors set the pace with IO representatives among the 36 players selected to the Ironman, Offensive and Defensive units. Greene Central landed nine.

Senior tailback Mark Strickland and mammoth defensive tackle Shaun Rose of the Warriors garnered the Big Eight's top individual accolades. Ditto among the All-Area elite.

Strickland emerges as the landslide choice of the Daily Times sports staff as the Player of the Year. The 6-foot-3, 225-pound, multi-purpose performer reigns as the Ironman of the Year and the Offensive Player of the Year in the process.

Rose, at 6-6, 310 pounds and a Shrine Bowl selection, stands huge as the Defensive Player of the Year. Rose has verbally committed to continue his career at East Carolina University.

Strickland, who also excelled defensively and as a punter, is joined by senior teammate Virgil Parker, a fullback-linebacker on the Ironman unit.

Greene Central is the Ironman front-runner with the senior trio of Antwane Yelverton, also headed for ECU, Johnny Aytch and Terrell Bright.

The exclusive unit also features 6-7, 245-pound senior Southern Nash running back-defensive end Julius Peppers. Peppers, who verbally committed to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will also be showcased in Saturday's Shrine Bowl in Charlotte.

Other Ironmen are senior J.T. Windham and junior Rayvonne Newkirk of Pike, seniors Kelsie Langston and Dominique Lindsay of Beddingfield, senior Kyle Creech of North Johnston, and senior Adam Pittman of Charles B. Aycock.

Single-season 1,000-yard rushers Tarvarus Redmond of South-West Edgecombe and Alfae Brown of Greene Central trigger an offensive unit, directed by senior Greene Central quarterback Jermaine Moore.


Mark Strickland
... Player of the Year


Shaun Rose
... top defensive player

Honorable Mention 97

BEDDINGFIELD — Brandy Barnes, James Williams, Kelvin Beamon, Tuck Thomas.

FIKE — Justin Mason, Antonio Rogers, Johnny Coley, Rod Harris, James Roundtree, Philip Bissette, Frank Sasser.

HUNT — Montae Ruffin, Derrick Gray, Donnelle Knight, Anthony Barnes, Robert Best, Cedric Williams, William Hesmer, Mike Linsey, Bobby Hinnant, Kedran Bynum, Eddie Barnes.

SOUTHWEST EGECOMBE — Bash Knight, Clifton Wooten, Brandon Hussey, Quarry' Williams, John Pittman, Frank Barnes, Brad Cobb, William Autry, Deshawn Richardson, Jerard Wiggins.

SOUTHERN NASH — Travis Battle, Derrick High, Cornelius Gary, Terrell Taybron, Jason Earp, Derrick Lucas, Jon Keen, Demario Daniels, Derrick Jones.

CHARLES B. AYCOCK — C.C. Dunn, Edwin Finch, Nelson Cunningham, Jerry Johnson, Adam Butler, Les Stewart, Ardar Hicks, Matt Rast, Stevie Parrish, Bryant Hoots.

GREENE CENTRAL — Jody Ginn, Matt Noble, Irvin Perkins, Tamarka Davis, Michael Croom, Dennis Hines, Austin Suggs, Ben Harper.

NORTH JOHNSTON — Dennis Brockington, Devon Hinton, Lee Melvin, Antonio Stanch, Jay Creech, Dusty Johnson, Scott Miles, Greg Sawyer.

ENCSD — Patrick Squire, Jamaine Black, Bruce Fritz, Patrick McMillan, Edrick Webb, Richard McClennahan.

Eastern N C. School for the Deaf senior Aric McClennahan and Rams' senior Reginald Reid are the receivers, while Hunt junior John Hyde is the kicking specialist.

The linemen are 6-5, 300-pound senior Shaun Breen of Hunt, senior Adam Mills of Southern Nash, junior Brad Walston of Southwest, senior Preston Anders of Beddingfield, sophomore Mark Barnes of Hunt and junior Mitch Gay of Greene Central.

Rose anchors the defensive front that includes junior Chris Wilder of Southern Nash, senior Demetrius Blount of Hunt, and sophomore Georgic Bullock of Southwest.

The linebacking quartet is the Hunt trio of senior Mike Marcello, junior B J. Deans and sophomore Chico Deberry and senior Trevlan Devaughn of Beddingfield.

In the secondary are the Greene Central tandem of senior A.W. Abbott and junior Antonio Jones, senior Ron Harris of Southern Nash and senior William Barnes of Fike.

Strickland became the Warriors' all-time top single-season rusher with 1,970 yards and scored a whopping 31 rushing touchdowns. He averaged some 35 yards per punt and, at crunch time, was situated in the defensive secondary.

"Mark developed into a much better football player every year," said Hunt head coach Randy Raper. "He's very aggressive and just has that natural knack."

Strickland demonstrated abilities as a power runner his junior season at fullback. He proved he could block, but his senior campaign saw him step out with above-average speed and mobility.

"We didn't really know how well he would do," Raper said. "A tailback must have a certain vision and feel for the game. Mark had it."

Raper proudly describes Rose as "a man among boys." His all-star foundation is not based on statistics — but impact. Rose didn't just occupy a sizable amount of space.

"He creates his own space," Raper said. "Teams ran away from him a lot this year, or they were trying to double-team, chop or cut him. He runs the 40 (-yard dash) in 4.9 (seconds) and has great feet. He was dominating player. He was just about our whole defense."

That's a powerful statement, considering the presence of Parker, Strickland, Marcello, Deans, Deberry and Mark Barnes. But Raper explains teammates enjoyed all-star seasons because of Rose's presence.

Deberry and Deans became a lethal pair well into the season. Parker was there on defense, and provided running room for Strickland. Hyde seldom missed on extra-point and short field-goal kicks. Mark Barnes excelled as a blocker and became a capable receiver. Strickland couldn't be blamed for following Parker and Breen.

McClennahan ranked as the area's top receiver, while Moore was the most accurate passer — benefiting from targets such as Reid, Jones and Bright. Yelverton filled multiple Greene Central roles despite a nagging injury and Brown stepped up to join Strickland, Redmond and Peppers as backs piling up more than 1,000 yards rushing.

Peppers cracked the 1,000-yard plateau for the third consecutive season, but his greatest value may have been defensively. Peppers, Harris, the leading tackler; Wilder and Mills guided the Firebirds into the playoffs for the second straight year.

Deserving much credit for the Fike turnaround is the trio of Newkirk, William Barnes and Windham.

Defense was rugged for Greene Central because of a secondary, where Abbott was solid, and Jones was spectacular. Aytch's quickness plagued Rams' opponents both sides of the football.

Mainstays Langston, Lindsay, Anders and Devaughn were bright spots during a bleak Beddingfield season.

Defense


Abbott


Harris


W. Barnes


Devaughn


Marcello


Deans


Deberry


Wilder


Jones


Bullock


Blount

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https://newspaperarchive.com/wilson-daily-times-dec-16-1997-p-16/

Peppers, Lewis repeat atop All-Area lineups

By Sports Staff

For the second consecutive season, junior 6-foot-6 center Julius Peppers of Southern Nash and senior 5-10 guard Tynesha Lewis of Southwest Edgecombe have been named The Wilson Daily Times male and female Player of the Year, respectively, but the remainder of the 1996-97 All-Area 15-player rosters include many new faces.

Peppers is joined by by Beddingfield senior forward Grady Farmer and Hunt senior forward Reggie Farmer as boys repeaters. Each, a second-team choice last season, joins Peppers, Hunt senior center Corey Cooper and Beddingfield senior guard Garrison Harris on the first team.

Lewis, an N.C. State signee, enjoyed another phenomenal season for the Lady Cougars, who were 109-12 during her four years. She is joined on the first team by Fike senior guard Roc Canady, junior Charles B, Aycock guard Jeri Lyn Coker, North Johnston senior forward Heather Casey and senior Southern Nash forward Rikki Cockrell.

The girls team lists seven repeaters. Lewis and Canady have been first-team selections the past three seasons (each was also named her freshman season). Coker and Casey were second-team picks a year ago while Cockrell is a newcomer.

Second-team picks for the boys are Greene Central's Antoine Davis, Hunt's Jeff Strunk, CBA's Ray Potts, Southwest Edgecombe's Willie McGhee and Fike's Derrick McDowell.

The third team: Eastern N.C. School for the Deaf's Jamaine Black, Fike's Johnnie Lucas, Greenfield's Jason Gunnin, North Johnston's D.J. Brockington and Southern Nash's Demario Daniels.

The girls second team is North Johnston's Sora Standley, Greene Central's Jameka Dixon, Fike's Shemkia Reid, Hunt's Chavonne Pippiens and Southern Nash's Kari Ezzell.

The third team: Emily West and Susan Herndon of CBA, North Johnston's Kelly Holland, Hunt's Natasha Locus and Southwest Edgecombe's Susie Beamon.

Players of Year

The unselfish, low-key Peppers, a flamboyant dunker with the capability to dominate games, turned in an outstanding all-around performance.

Southern (14-13) finished second in both the Big Eight regular season and tournament, and head coach Rick Ruffin says Peppers deserves much of the credit.

"I think in some people's eyes, he didn't have as good a year," Ruffin said, "but percentage wise, he shot better and his assists were way up."

The high-flying Peppers shot a torrid 60,1 percent from the field (179-298), averaging 16.9 points, 9.7 rebounds, three assists, 2.1 steals and 1.7 blocks — usually with two or three defenders surrounding him. He averaged nearly 18 points and 10.4 rebounds in Big Eight games.

Ruffin emphasizes that Peppers "still has a lot of ability. He hasn't really shown all of his capabilities. I feel like he'll reach that — maybe next year."

Like Peppers, Lewis spent much of her season helping teammates develop confidence, but, when the game was on the line, she took control. With superior ballhandling, slashing moves to the basket and a long-range jumper, the two-time Big Eight Player of the Year dominated.

Lewis averaged an area-high 22.4 points, eight rebounds, 5.5 assists and four steals. She is also ranked 12th in her class academically and is the student government president.

"She is a complete player," Langley said. "She can score, plays outstanding defense and is an excellent leader. I have no doubt she could have averaged 30-35 points a night, but she wanted to get her teammates involved.

"Looking at all the girls I've coached, I think Tynesha may have the best chance to make it big at the collegiate level because of her versatility."

Supporting casts

Cooper, the Big Eight Player of the Year, was runner-up for All-Area Boys Player of the Year — averaging 15.4 points and nine rebounds. Reggie Farmer averaged 10.5 points and helped trigger Hunt's defense en route to Big Eight regular-season and tourney and Eastern Carolina Classic championships. Grady Farmer was the steady player for the Bruins, knocking down 16.4 points per game. Harris (14.7 ppg), the All-Area Offensive Player of the Year in football, was Beddingfield's primary outside threat.

On the second team, Greene Central's Davis scored at a 14.6 clip and Strunk ignited many rallies during a precedent-setting Hunt season. Potts pumped in 16.4 points per game for CBA; McGhee worked hard inside for his 14.7 points for SWE and McDowell netted 13.7 ppg for Fike.

ENCSD's Black emerged the top area scorer at 21 points per game. Lucas jump-started struggling Fike when he joined them in late December; Gunnin powered Greenfield's attack at 17.3 ppg; Brockington averaged 11.5 points for the Panthers; and Daniels was Peppers' capable sidekick.

On the girls first team, Canady sacrificed personal goals for team goals and it netted the Lady Demons sectional and regional championships and a state runner-up trophy. She averaged 11.6 points and five assists. Coker was CBA's catalyst, averaging 16.9 points. Casey averaged 12.1 points and Cockrell led Southern to its best record, 17-11.

The second team includes three centers. Standley was North Johnston's top scorer at 13.3 per game; Reid averaged 12 points; and Ezzell (13.3 ppg) joined Cockrell to provide Southern with a solid one-two punch. Forward Pippiens (17.7 ppg) powered Hunt and Dixon (16.9 ppg) was Greene Central's leading scorer in all but one game.

West (15.5 ppg) and Herndon (10.0) were tough inside for CBA. Locus, a four-year starter, and Holland, ran the show for Hunt and North Johnston, respectively, while SWE's Beamon used her 6-1 frame to average 10 points an outing.

Second teams



Strunk



Standley



Davis



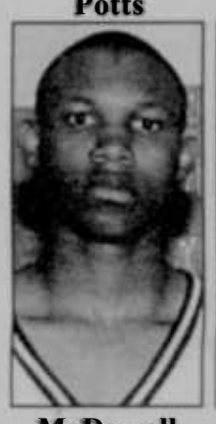
Dixon



Potts



Pippiens



McDowell



Reid



McGhee



Ezzell

Third teams



Black



West



Lucas



Holland



Gunnin



Herndon



Brockington



Locus



Daniels



Beamon

All-Area First Teams

Boys



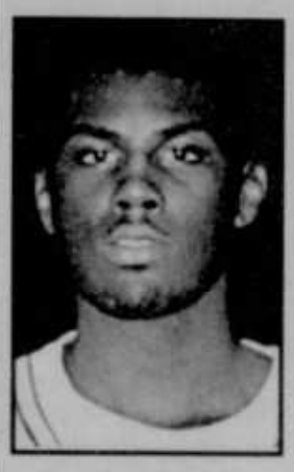
Player of the Year

Julius Peppers

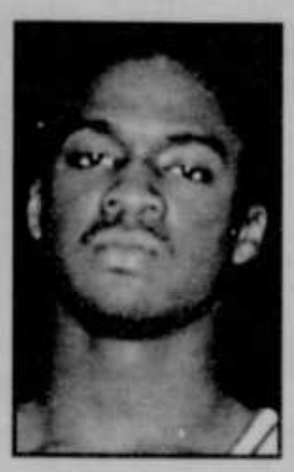
Southern Nash

Junior 245 pounds 6-foot-6

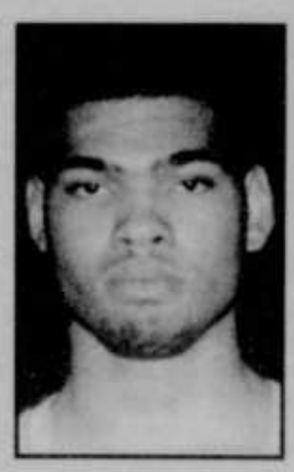
Peppers led the Firebirds to second-place finishes in the Class 3-A Big Eight Conference regular-season race and league tournament. He averaged 16.9 points and 9.7 rebounds, 3.0 assists, 2.1 steals and 1.7 blocks per game.



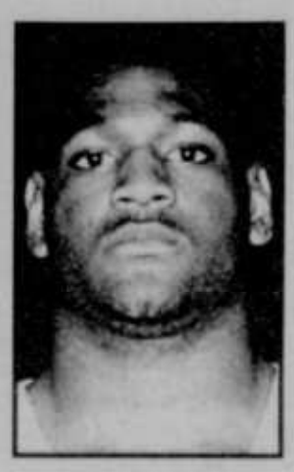
Corey Cooper ... Hunt senior



Reggie Farmer ... Hunt senior



Grady Farmer ... Bruins senior



Garrison Harris ... Bruins senior

Girls

Player of the Year

Tynesha Lewis

SouthWest Edgecombe

Senior Guard 5-foot-11

Lewis led the Lady Cougars to their third consecutive undefeated Class 3-A Big Eight Conference record, their third straight league tournament championship and into the state playoffs. Lewis, whose defending 3-A state champs lost in the sectionals, signed a letter-of-intent to attend N.C. State.





Roc Canady ... Fike senior



Jeri Lyn Coker ... C.B. Aycock junior



Heather Casey ... N.J. senior



Rikki Cockrell ... So. Nash senior

All-Area boys roster

First team

PLAYER	SCHOOL	POS	HGT	YR
Julius Peppers	S. Nash	C	6-6	JR
Corey Cooper	Hunt	C	6-6	SR
Grady Farmer	Beddingfield	F	6-4	SR
Reggie Farmer	Hunt	F	6-3	SR
Garrison Harris	Beddingfield	G	6-3	SR

Second team

Antoine Davis	G. Central	F	60	SR
Jeff Strunk	Hunt	F	6-3	SR
Ray Potts	C.B. Aycock	C	6-4	SR
Willie McGhee	SW Edgecombe	C	6-3	SR
Derrick McDowell	Fike	F	6-2	JR

Third team

Jamaine Black	ENCSD	F	6*2	JR
Johnnie Lucas	Fike	G	5-8	SO
Jason Gunnin	Greenfield	F	6-4	SR
D.J. Brockington	N. Johnston	F	6-0	JR
Demario Daniels	S. Nash	F	6-5	JR

Honorable mention

BOYS

BEDDINGFIELD — Kelly Winstead, Travia Taylor

CHARLES B. AYCOCK — Bobby Byers, Kamaal Goyens, Parker King.

ENCSD — Anc McClennahan, Patrick Squire.

FIKE — Idris Talib, Rashaun Sauls.

GREENE CENTRAL — Antwane Yelverton, Jermaine Moore, Devone Duncan.

GREENFIELD — Paul Gay.

HUNT — Keji Dickerson, Greg Ward, Kevin Wiggins, Tony Clay, Tim Carmichael.

NORTH JOHNSTON — Jason Morgan, Travis Barnes, Tim Cuddington.

SOUTHERN NASH — Derrick High, Darius Newkirk.

SOUTHWEST EDGECOMBE — Leon Dupree, Jay McKinney, Jovie Sumner.

WILSON CHRISTIAN — Bert Harris, Andrew Perry, Robbie Bennett, Dennison Dew.

GIRLS

BEDDINGFIELD — Katherine Bagley, Ashley Green.

CHARLES B. AYCOCK — Stephanie Cannon, Stephanie Lawrence.

ENCSD — Mellisa Chatman, Melissa Hargrove.

FIKE — Carolyn Gillikin, Elizabeth Spencer, Beth Foster, Kalita Marsh.

GREENE CENTRAL — Key% Darden.

HUNT — Vakesha Thomas, Jennifer Laughridge.

NORTH JOHNSTON — Melody Toole, Dana Evans, Amy Hicks.

SOUTHERN NASH — Julie Pitts, Anna Tharrington, Melissa Pendley.

SOUTHWEST EDGECOMBE — Loni Ayers, Chessins Thigpen

WILSON CHRISTIAN — Julie Jones, Stephanie Bogue.

All-Area girls roster

First team

PLAYER	SCHOOL	POS	HGT	YR
Tynesha Lewis	SW Edgecombe	G	5-11	SR
Roc Canady	Fike	G	5- 8	SR
Jeri Lyn Coker	C.B. Aycock	G	5- 4	JR
Heather Casey	N. Johnston	F	5-10	SR
Rikki Cockrell	S. Nash	F	5-10	SR

Second team

Sora Standley	N. Johnston	C	5-10	JR
Jameka Dixon	G. Central	G	5- 7	JR
Shemkia Reid	Fike	C	5-11	JR
Chavonne Pippiens	Hunt	F	5- 7	SO
Kari Ezzell	S. Nash	C	5-11	JR

Third team

Emily West	C.B. Aycock	C	5-11	JR
Kelly Holland	N. Johnston	G	5- 8	JR
Susan Herndon	C.B. Aycock	F	5-10	JR
Natasha Locus	Hunt	G	5- 4	SR
Susie Beamon	SW Edgecombe	C	6- 1	SR

NEWSPAPERARCHIVE

Wilson Daily Times, April 05, 1997,Pg. 20, Wilson, North Carolina, US

https://newspaperarchive.com/wilson-daily-times-apr-05-1997-p-20/

Majors

Friday's boxes

American League

Devil Rays.....4
Orioles.....1

TAMPA BAY	ab	r	h	bi	BALTIMORE	ab	r	h	bi
Winn rf	4	1	2	0	ByAdsn cf	4	0	1	0
McCkn cf	2	0	0	1	EDavis rf	3	1	1	1
[illegible] db	4	0	1	0	RAtmr 2b	4	0	1	0
Srff lb	4	0	0	0	Carter dh	3	0	1	0
MKelly H	4	1	2	1	Baines dh	1	0	0	0
Ldsma 3b	4	1	2	0	RPtmr 1b	3	0	0	0
DiFlce c	4	0	0	0	CRpken 3b	4	0	0	0
Stocker ss	4	1	1	1	Surhoff lf	4	0	1	0
Cairo 2b	3	0	1	1	Holies c	3	0	1	0
					Hmnds ph	1	0	0	0
					Bordick ss	2	0	0	0
Totals	33	4	9	4	Totals	32	1	6	1

Tampa Bay	020	010	001	— 4
Baltimore	000	001	000	— 1

E—Ledesma (1). DP—Tampa Bay 2. Baltimore 1. LOB—Tampa Bay 4 Baltimore 7. 2B—Ledesma (3). 3B—Winn (1). Stocker (3). HR—MKelly (3). EDavis (7) S—McCracken SF—McCracken

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Tampa Bay						
Alvarez W,4-4	7	6	1	1	2	3
Mecir	1	0	0	0	0	1
RHe'ndez S,5	1	0	0	0	0	0
Baltimore						
Key L,4-2	7 1/3	0	3	3	0	2
Charlton	1 2/3	1	1	1	0	1

Alvarez pitched to 2 batters in the 8th
HBP—by Alvarez (Bordick).
Umpires—Home. Reed; First, O'Nora; Second. Tschida, Third. Denkinger
T—2:33 A—47.421 (48,262)

Blue Jays.....9
Angels.....1

ANAHEIM	ab	r	h	bi	TORONTO	ab	r	h	bi
Erstad 1b	4	0	0	0	Stewart cf	3	1	1	0
GAndsn lf	4	0	1	0	SGreen rf	4	2	1	1
Edmnd cf	4	0	0	0	Cnseco lf	3	1	1	1
Fielder dh	2	0	0	0	JoCruz cf	0	0	0	0
Nevin ph	1	0	0	0	CDlgdo 1b	5	1	1	1 0
Bolick 3b	3	0	0	0	Stanley dh	2	1	1	2
Wlbeck c	4	0	0	0	TFrndz 2b	3	3	2	2
Mshore rf	3	0	0	0	Sprgue 3b	3	0	2	1
NMritn 2b	3	1	1	0	Fltcner c	4	0	1	2
DSrcna ss	2	0	1	0	AGnzlz ss	4	0	1	0
Shipley ss	1	0	0	0	Grbeck ss	0	0	0	0
Totals	31	1	3	0	Totals	31	9	11	9

Anaheim	000	001	000	— 1
Toronto	440	000	10x	— 9

DP—Anaheim 2 LOB—Anaheim 5, Toronto 7 2B—GAnderson (9), SGreen (6), CDelgado (8), TFernandez (11). HR—TFernandez (3) SB—Stewart (12), SGreen (7), Canseco (10). CS—Stewart (6) SF—Stanley

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Anaheim						
KHill L,6-2	1 2/3	5	8	8	5	1
Hasegawa	4*3	6	1	1	1	0
Cadaret	1⅔	0	0	0	1	3
Toronto						
Hentgen W,5-3	7	2	1	1	1	5
Carpenter	2	1	0	0	1	2

HBP—by KHill (Stewart). WP—Hasegawa, Hentgen
Umpires—Home. Brinkman; First, Cousins; Second, Welke; Third, Cederstrom
T—2:32 A—26,644 (51,000).

Red Sox.....5
Royals.....2

KANSAS CITY	ab	r	h	bi	BOSTON	ab	r	h	bi
Damon cf	4	0	1	0	DLewis rf	4	0	0	0
Halter ss	4	0	1	0	Buford cf	4	0	1	0
Offmn 2b	4	1	2	0	MVghn 1b	4	0	0	0
Mack dh	4	0	1	1	Leyritz dh	4	2	2	1
Conine lf	4	0	0	0	O'Lry lf	4	1	1	0
JKing 1b	3	0	2	0	Vantek c	4	1	1	0
Pndlton 3b	4	1	1	0	Bnjmin ss	3	1	1	1
Dye rf	3	0	0	0	Merloni 3b	2	1	2	3
Sutton ph	1	0	0	0	Lemke 2b	3	0	0	0
Fasanoc	3	0	1	1					
Totals	34	2	9	2	Totals	32	5	8	5

Kansas City	000	001	100	— 2
Boston	050	000	00x	— 5

DP—Boston 1. LOB—Kansas City 6, Boston 4. 2B—Mack (7). Fasano (1), Buford (6), Leyritz (3). Benjamin (5), Merloni (1), HR—Leyritz (7), Merloni (1). CS—Halter (1).

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Kansas City						
Rosado L,0-3	6	8	5	5	1	2
Bevil	$3	0	0	0	0	0
Whisenant	1⅓	0	0	3	0	0
Boston						
Wfield W,5-1	7	7	2	2	1	6
Corsi	1	1	0	0	0	0
Eckersley S,1	1	1	0	0	0	0

Umpires—Home. Ford; First. Hendry; Second. Culbreth; Third, Coble
T—2:13. A—31,466 (33.925)

White Sox.....6
Mariners.....3

SEATTLE	ab	r	h	bi	CHICAGO	ab	r	h	bi
Amaral rf	5	0	1	0	Cmeron cf	3	0	0	1
Cora 2b	3	1	1	0	Snopek 2b	4	1	2	0
Grfy Jr cf	3	0	1	0	FThms dh	4	1	1	0
ARdrgz ss	4	0	0	1	Belle lf	4	1	1	3
EMrtnz dh	3	0	0	0	Vntura 3b	4	0	0	0
GHill lf	4	0	0	0	Sierra rf	4	0	1	0
RDavis 3b	3	1	0	0	MOrdz rf	0	0	0	0
Mrzano c	3	0	1	0	Norton 1b	4	2	2	0
Ducey ph	1	0	0	0	O'Brien c	4	1	3	0
Huson 1b	4	1	1	2	Caruso ss	3	0	1	1
Totals	33	3	5	3	Totals	34	6	11	5

Seattle	000	100	200	— 3
Chicago	320	100	00x	— 6

E—RDavis (11), Swift (2). DP—Chicago 1. LOB—Seattle 7, Chicago 6. 2B—Cora (8), FThomas (12), Norton (5), O'Brien 2 (4) HR—Huson (1), Belle (9) CS—Cameron (3), Caruso (2).

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Seattle						
Swift L,2-3	3 2/3	7	6	4	1	1
Lira	4⅓	4	0	0	0	6
Chicago						
Navarro W,4-3	7 1/3	7	3	3	2	2
Foulke S,1	1*5	0	0	0	0	1

HBP—by Navarro (RDavis), by Swift (Caruso), by Navarro (Cora) WP—Navarro
Umpires—Home, Evans. First, McCoy; Second. Foster, Third, Meriwether
T—2:25 A—16.127 (44.321).

Majors

By The Associated Press
All Times EDT

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB	LIO	Str	Home	Away	Intr
New York	26	9	743	—	z-7-3	L-2	11-3	15-6	0-0
Boston	25	15	625	3½	4-6	W-1	15-5	10-10	0-0
Baltimore	20	20	500	8½	4-6	L-2	10-10	10-10	0-0
Toronto	19	21	475	9½	Z-7-3	W-2	8-9	11-12	0-0
Tampa Bay	17	22	436	11	5-5	W-1	8-12	9-10	0-0

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB	LIO	Str	Home	Away	Intr
Cleveland	22	18	550	—	z-4-6	W-2	12-7	10-11	0-0
Minnesota	18	22	450	4	6-4	W-4	8-13	10-9	0-0
Chicago	17	21	447	4	z-6-4	W-2	8-7	9-14	0-0
Kansas City	16	24	400	6	z-4-6	L-1	6-15	10-9	0-0
Detroit	13	23	361	7	6-4	W-3	7-8	6-15	0-0

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB	LIO	Str	Home	Away	Intr
Texas	25	15	625	—	6-4	L-1	15-7	10-8	0-0
Anaheim	20	19	.513	4½	3-7	L-2	12-12	8-7	OO
Seattle	19	21	475	6	z-5-5	L-3	12-11	7-10	0-0
Oakland	16	23	410	8½	z-3-7	L-2	9-13	7-10	0-0

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB	LIO	Str	Home	Away	Intr
Atlanta	31	11	738	—	z-9-1	W-7	18-6	13-5	0-0
New York	19	17	528	9	z-6-4	L-2	13-9	6-8	0-0
Philadelphia	20	18	526	9	7-3	W-1	14-7	6-11	0-0
Montreal	14	25	359	15½	z-4-6	L-2	11-13	3-12	0-0
Florida	14	28	333	17	3-7	W-1	10-15	4-13	0-0

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB	LIO	Str	Home	Away	Intr
Houston	25	15	625	—	z-6-4	L-2	11-6	14-9	0-0
Chicago	23	18	561	2½	Z-7-3	L-1	14-8	9-10	0-0
Milwaukee	20	18	526	4	3-7	L-1	10-10	10-8	0-0
Cincinnati	21	20	.512	4½	Z-6-4	W-3	10-9	11-11	0-0
St Louis	19	20	487	5½	z-3-7	L-3	12-6	7-14	0-0
Pittsburgh	19	21	475	6	z-7-3	W-1	13-11	6-10	0-0

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB	LIO	Str	Home	Away	Intr
San Diego	26	14	650	—	z-5-5	W-2	12-4	14-10	0-0
San Francisco	23	18	561	3½	z-7-3	W-2	12-6	11-12	0-0
Los Angeles	19	21	475	7	3-7	L-1	10-6	9-15	0-0
Colorado	17	24	415	9½	z-3-7	L-4	4-13	13-11	0-0
Arizona	9	31	225	17	z-2-8	W-1	5-11	4-20	0-0

z-first game was a win

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Thursday's Games
Minnesota 2, Boston 1, 12 innings
Kansas City 10, Tampa Bay 2
Detroit 8, Oakland 3
Toronto 5. Anaheim 4
Cleveland 5, Baltimore 4
Chicago White Sox 5, Seattle 3
Texas 7, N Y. Yankees 5,13 innings

Friday's Games
Detroit 8. Oakland 3
Cleveland 3, Texas 2, 14 innings
Toronto 9, Anaheim 1
Tampa Bay 4, Baltimore 1
Boston 5, Kansas City 2
Minnesota 7, N Y Yankees 6
Chicago White Sox 6, Seattle 3

Saturday's Games
Anaheim (Dickson 1-4) at Detroit (Worrell 2-4). 1:05 p m

Texas (Witt 4-1) at Cleveland (Burba 3-4), 1:05 p.m.

Seattle (Fassero 4-1) at Toronto (Guzman 1-5), 1:05 p m.

Kansas City (Walker 0-0) at Boston (Avery 0-0), 1:05 p.m.

Tampa Bay (Arrojo 5-2) at Baltimore (Erickson 4-3), 1:35 p m,

Minnesota (Tewksbury 3-5) at N.Y. Yankees (Mendoza 2-1), 1:35 p m.

Oakland (Stein 0-1) at Chicago White Sox (Castillo 1-2), 7:05 p m

Sunday's Games
Anaheim at Detroit, 1:05 p.m.
Texas at Cleveland, 1:05 p m.
Kansas City at Boston. 1:05 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Baltimore, 1:35 p m,
Minnesota at N Y. Yankees, 1:35 p.m.
Oakland at Chicago White Sox, 2:05 p m
Seattle at Toronto, 8:05 p.m.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Thursday's Games
San Francisco 6, Montreal 1, 1st game
San Francisco 2, Montreal 0, 2nd game
Chicago Cubs 9, Colorado 7
San Diego 3, N Y. Mets 1, 1st game
San Diego 6, N Y Mets 2, 2nd game
Cincinnati 11, Florida 8
Pittsburgh 7, Houston 2
Atlanta 7, St. Louis 3
Philadelphia 4, Los Angeles 0
Arizona 4, Milwaukee 1

Friday's Games
Late Games Not Included
Cincinnati 11, Chicago Cubs 3
Atlanta 3, Houston 2
Florida 8. St. Louis 7
Milwaukee at Colorado, (n)
Pittsburgh at Arizona, (n)
Montreal at Los Angeles, (n)
Philadelphia at San Diego, (n)
N Y. Mets at San Francisco, (n)

Saturday's Games
Milwaukee (Kart 4-1) at Colorado (Ritz 0-1), 3:05 p m.
N Y Mets (Reed 3-2) at San Francisco (Rueter 4-2). 4:05 p.m.
Chicago Cubs (Clark 2-5) at Cincinnati (Remlmger 3-4). 7:05 p m
Atlanta (Maddux 5-2) at Houston (Reynolds 3-2). 8:05 p m
Florida (Hernandez 2-3) at St. Louis (Stottlemyre 4-3), 8:10 p.m.
Pittsburgh (Schmidt 5-1) at Arizona (Anderson 1-4), 10:05 p m
Montreal (Vazquez 1-4) at Los Angeles (Dreifort 0-4), 10:05 p m.
Philadelphia (Beech 1-2) at San Diego (Brown 3-2), 10:05 p m.

Sunday's Games
Chicago Cubs at Cincinnati, 1:15 p.m.
Florida at St. Louis, 2:10 p m.
Atlanta at Houston, 2:35 p m
Milwaukee at Colorado, 3:05 p m
Montreal at Los Angeles, 4:05 p.m.
Philadelphia at San Diego, 4:05 p.m.
N Y Mets at San Francisco. 4:05 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Arizona. 9:05 p.m.

Twins.....7
Yankees.....6

MINNESOTA	ab	r	h	bi	NEW YORK	ab	r	h	bi
Meares ss	5	1	2	0	Knblch 2b	5	0	0	0
Lawton cf	5	1	2	1	Jeter ss	5	1	2	2
Molitor dh	3	1	0	1	O'Neill rf	5	0	1	0
MCdva lf	4	1	2	3	BWlms cf	4	0	0	0
Coonier 1b	5	1	1	2	TMrtnz 1b	4	1	2	0
Ochoa rf	3	0	1	0	Raines dh	4	1	1	0
Stnbch c	4	0	1	0	Curtis lf	3	2	1	2
Shave 3b	4	1	2	0	Brosius 3b	3	1	3	2
Hoking 2b	3	1	1	0	Girardi c	2	0	0	0
					Posada c	1	0	0	0
Totals	36	7	12	7	Totals	36	6	10	6

Minnesota	204	100	000	— 7
New York	030	002	100	— 6

DP—New York 3. LOB—Minnesota 7, New York 6. 2B—Lawton (10), MCordova (5), TMartinez 2 (13), Brosius 2 (10). HR—Coonier (7), Jeter (7), Curtis (5) SB—Shave (1), Hocking (1). CS—Brosius (2). SF—Molitor.

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Minnesota						
Milton W,3-4	5	8	5	5	2	0
Trombley	1	1	1	1	1	1
Swindell	2	1	0	0	0	1
Aguilera S,8	1	0	0	0	0	0
New York						
Pettitte L,5-4	7	12	7	7	4	4
Nelson	2	0	0	0	0	1

Milton pitched to 2 batters in the 6th, Trombley pitched to 1 batter in the 7th.
Umpires—Home, Garcia. First, Reilly; Second. McClelland, Third. Hirschbeck
T—3:27 A—31,272 (57,545).

Indians.....3
Rangers.....(14) 2

TEXAS	ab	r	h	bi	CLEVELAND	ab	r	h	bi
TGdwin cf	4	1	3	0	Lofton cf	6	0	1	0
McLmr 2b	5	0	0	0	Vizquel ss	5	0	1	1
Greer lf	6	1	1	0	Justice dh	5	1	3	1
JuGnlz rf	6	0	0	1	Thome 1b	5	0	1	0
WClark 1b	5	0	2	1	MRmrz rf	4	0	0	0
IRdrgz c	5	0	1	0	Giles lf	6	1	1	1
Stevens dh	5	0	2	0	SAlmr c	5	0	2	0
Cedeno dh	1	0	0	0	Frymn 3b	5	0	0	0
Elster ss	5	0	0	0	DaBell 2b	5	1	1	0
FTatis 3b	3	0	1	0					
Alicea 3b	2	0	0	0					
Totals	47	2	10	2	Totals	46	3	10	3

Texas	100	001	000	00 — 2
Cleveland	110	000	000	01 — 3

No outs when winning run scored
DP—Texas 2, Cleveland 3. LOB—Texas 8. Cleveland 9. 2B—TGoodwin (3), WClark (6). 3B—Greer (3). HR—Justice (9), Giles (9). SB—TGoodwin (16), McLemore (8). CS—TGoodwin (6).

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Texas						
Burkett	7	6	2	2	3	5
Gunderson	lb	1	0	0	0	1
Crabtree	1⅓	0	0	0	1	1
Bailes	2	1	0	0	0	3
Wetteland	1	0	0	0	0	2
Levine L,0-1	1	2	1	1	1	0
Cleveland						
JrWright	7	5	2	2	4	5
Assenmacher	2s	0	0	0	0	1
Mesa	IIa	1	0	0	0	1
MJackson	I	1	0	0	1	1
Villone	%	0	0	0	0	0
Plunk	2⅓a	2	0	0	0	3
Krivda W,2-0	1	1	0	0	1	1

Levine pitched to 1 batter in the 14th.
Umpires—Home, Joyce; First, Clark; Second, Craft; Third, McKean.
T—4:00 A—41,128 (43,863)

National League

Marlins.....8
Cardinals.....7

FLORIDA	ab	r	hbi	ST. LOUIS	ab	r	hbi
Cnglosi cf	3	0	0	DeShds 2b	4	1	1
Rnteria ss	4	2	3	RLnkfd cf	5	2	2
Floyd lf	4	1	2	MGwr1b	2	1	1
DLee 1b	5	1	1	BJrdan rf	4	1	2
Kotsay rf	5	3	2	Gaetti 3b	5	1	1
Zaun c	5	1	1	Mabry lf	5	0	4
Cunsell 2b	5	1	0	Clayton ss	3	0	0
Berg 3b	4	2	1	Painter p	0	0	0
FHrdia p	0	0	0	Gant ph	1	0	0
JPwell p	0	0	0	Acvedo p	0	0	0
Mdows p	3	2	1	McGee ph	0	0	0
Drnsbr p	0	0	0	Lmpkin c	3	0	0
Stnifer p	0	0	0	Pgnozzi c	2	0	1
Wehner 3b	1	0	0	Raggio p	0	0	0
				CKing p	0	0	0
				BRHntr ph	1	1	1
				Bttnfld p	0	0	0
				DHwrd ss	2	0	0
Totals	39	8	15	8 Totals	37	7	13

Florida	700	100	000	— 8
St. Louis	101	040	001	— 7

E—Clayton (7). DP—Florida 3. St Louis 1. LOB—Florida 8. St Louis 10 2B—Renteria (6), Mabry 2 (4) HR—RLankford 2 (4), BRHunter (2). SB—DeShields (9). CS—Renteria (2).

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Florida						
M'dows W,4-4	5	8	6	6	4	1
Darensbourg	1	1	0	0	0	2
Stanifer	1⅔	1	0	0	1	0
FHeredia	1⅓s	1	0	0	1	1
JPowell S,2	1	2	1	1	1	0
St. Louis						
Raggio L,0-1	2 3⅓	7	7	2	0	
CKing	2*3	1	0	0	0	0
Bottenfield	2	3	1	1	1	1
Painter	2	0	0	0	0	2
Acevedo	2	2	0	0	1	0

WP—BottenfieW, Acevedo
Umpires—Home, Poncino; First, Ripp ley; Second. Darting; Third, Winters
T—3 13 A—45,451 (49,676)

Braves..3
Astros...2

ATLANTA	ab	r	h	bi	HOUSTON	ab	r	h	bi
OGllen ss	4	0	0	0	Biggio 2b	3	0	1	0
Lckhrt 2b	4	0	0	0	DeBell rf	4	0	0	1
ChJnes 3b	4	0	0	0	Alou lf	4	0	1	0
Girrga 1b	3	0	0	0	Berry 3b	4	1	1	0
Klesko lf	2	1	1	0	Hidalgo cf	4	0	2	0
GerWm lf	1	0	0	0	Howell 1b	3	0	1	1
Tucker rf	4	0	1	0	Gterrez ss	4	0	0	0
EddPrz c	3	2	2	3	Asmus c	3	1	1	0
AJones cf	3	0	0	0	Lima p	1	0	0	0
Neagle p	3	0	0	0	Spiers ph	1	0	0	0
DeMrtz p	0	0	0	0	Ntkwsk p	0	0	0	0
					Esebto ph	1	0	0	0
					DHenry p	0	0	0	0
Totals	31	3	4	3	Totals	32	2	7	2

Atlanta	001	020	000	— 3
Houston	000	000	011	— 2

DP—Atlanta 2. LOB—Atlanta 3, Houston 5 2B—Biggio (16). Berry (6). Howell (4). HR—EddPerez 2 (2).

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Atlanta						
Neagle W,5-1	7⅓	6	1	1	2	5
DeMnez S,1	1*3	1	1	1	0	0
Houston						
Lima L,6-2	6	2	3	3	1	5
Nitkowski	2	2	0	0	1	1
DHenry	1	0	0	0	0	1

Umpires—Home, Reliford, First, Schrieber; Second, Montague; Third, DeMuth.
T—2:23. A—38,941 (54.370).

Golf

PGA

Byron Nelson Classic

IRVING, Texas (AP) — Scores Friday after the second round of the $2.5 million Byron Nelson Classic, played on the 6,924-yard, par-70 (35-35) TPC at Las Colinas and 6,846-yard, par-70 (34-36) Cottonwood Valley course:

Hal Sutton	66-65	— 131
Harrison Frazar	64-68	— 132
Fred Couples	66-67	— 133
Robert Damron	68-65	— 133
Bob Friend	63-70	— 133
Bob Estes	66-68	— 134
Jeff Sluman	67-67	— 134
Ted Tryba	66-68	— 134
Phil Mickelson	66-68	— 134
Tom Watson	64-70	— 134
John Cook	66-68	— 134
Scott Gump	65-70	— 135
Russ Cochran	68-67	— 135
Jay Don Blake	67-68	— 135
Payne Stewart	68-67	— 135
Jim Carter	68-68	— 136
Jim Furyk	66-70	— 136
Tiger Woods	65-71	— 136
Mark O'Meara	67-69	— 136
Donnie Hammond	66-70	— 136
Gabriel Hjertstedt	70-66	— 136
Bob Tway	70-66	— 136
Doug Martin	69-68	— 137
LenMattiace	71-66	— 137
Willie Wood	69-68	— 137
Frank Lickliter	65-72	— 137
Glen Hnatiuk	68-69	— 137
Blaine McCallister	65-72	— 137
Steve Flesch	71-66	— 137
Chris Perry	67-70	— 137
Rocco Mediate	67-70	— 137
Corey Pavin	70-67	— 137
Justin Leonard	68-69	— 137
Craig Barlow	69-68	— 137
LeeRinker	69-68	— 137
Omar Uresti	69-68	— 137

LPGA

McDonald's Championship

ROCKLAND, Del. (AP) — Scores Friday after the second round of the $1.3 million McDonald's LPGA Championship. played on the 6,386-yard, par-71 DuPont Country Club course:

Se Ri Pak	65-68	— 133
Usa Walters	66-69	— 135
Usa Hackney	70-66	— 136
Dale Eggeling	68-69	— 137
Donna Andrews	71-67	— 138
Wendy Ward	71-67	— 138
Jane Geddes	69-69	— 138
Emilee Klein	72-67	— 139
Tammie Green	72-68	— 140
Meg Mallon	71-69	— 140
Dawn Coe-Jones	71-69	— 140
Annette DeLuca	70-70	— 140
Chris Johnson	69-71	— 140
Kelly Robbins	69-71	— 140
Cathy Johnston-Forbes	71-70	— 141
Maria Hjorth	71-70	— 141
Juli Inkster	70-71	— 141
Michele Redman	70-71	— 141
Liselotte Neumann	73-69	— 142
Joanne Morley	73-69	— 142
Michelle Estill	72-70	— 142
Missie Berteotti	72-70	— 142
Kris Tschetter	71-71	— 142
Rachel Hetherington	71-71	— 142
Helen Alfredsson	71-71	— 142
Catrin Nilsmark	69-73	— 142
Michelle McGann	68-74	— 142
Jenny Lidback	70-73	— 143
Penny Hammel	70-73	— 143
Kim Saiki	69-74	— 143
Vickie Odegard	69-74	— 143

Seniors

Saint Luke's Classic

BELTON, Mo (AP) — Scores Friday's after the first round of the $1 million Saint Luke s Seniors Classic, played on the 6,539-yard, par 35-35—70 Loch Lloyd Country Club:

Fred Gibson	32-33	— 65
Bruce Summerhays	32-36	— 68
Larry Ziegler	34-35	— 69
Isao Aoki	35-35	— 70
Bob E Smith	35-36	— 71
Bob Duval	36-35	— 71
Don Klenk	35-36	— 71
Ed Sneed	36-35	— 71
Charles Coody	33-38	— 71
Tom Wargo	35-36	— 71
Chuck Thorpe	39-33	— 72
Don Maddox	35-37	— 72
Dana Quigley	35-37	— 72
Jim Colbert	36-36	— 72
Bob Murphy	36-36	— 72
Mike McCullough	36-36	— 72
Bobby Stroble	35-37	— 72
Tom Jenkins	38-35	— 73
Rik Massengale	36-37	— 73
Jerry McGee	35-38	— 73
Miller Barber	36-37	— 73
Tom Shaw	38-35	— 73
Dave Eichelberger	36-37	— 73
Gibby Gilbert	36-37	— 73

Transactions

BASEBALL
American League
BALTIMORE ORIOLES—Purchased the contract of RHP Bobby Munoz from Rochester of the International League. Optioned C Charlie Greene to [illegible]

TAMPA BAY DEVIL RAYS—Recalled LHP Scott Aldred from Durham of the International League Optioned LHP Ramon Tatis to Hudson Valley of the New York-Penn League Transferred RHP Bryan Rekar from the 15-day to the 60-day disabled list. retroactive to March 31.

Pacific Coast League
CALGARY CANNONS—Activated LHP Rich Pratt from the disabled list Released INF Rene Gonzales.

Midwest League
WISCONSIN TIMBER RATTLERS—Placed LHP Ryan Anderson on the disabled list, retroactive to May 12. Recalled RHP Harold Koehler from Lancaster of the California League

Texas-Louialana League
LUBBOCK CRICKETS—Signed C Bray Woodruss

Western League
BEND BANDITS—Traded INF-OF Danny Grice to the Madison Black Wolves of the Northern League for future considerations. Released RHP Brett

2017 NBNO Mike Byrnes Coach of the Year: Alton Tyre

Jun 30, 2017by Steve Underwood



Quietly Building a Legacy

Some folks might think a national track and field coach of the year award is reserved only for those whose athletes win national titles, rack up All-American honors, or at least accumulate a couple handfuls of state championships.



But sometimes it's the individual who has the ability to be among those who quietly advance the sport, positively affect lives in different ways, and become forces for good in their communities who merits such an honor. Sometimes it's

that person whose influence gradually begins to outgrow the coach's community and region, to the point where folks start to feel this person deserves recognition at a higher level.

Alton Tyre has become that person. And if ever there was a coach who did not seek out such recognition and thereby was stunned to learn he'd receive such an award, it's this **Southeast Guilford, N.C.** boys and girls T&F mentor – who will be honored as the **2017 Mike Byrnes Coach of the Year** at this year's NBNO.

"I'm shocked," he said, "and I'm grateful and deeply honored." It's not just Coach Tyre's humility, but the fact that his primary focus was basketball and football for the first third of his 39-year coaching career. He'll tell you when he tried track and field a few years in high school, he was awful, and while he was better at football and basketball, he began to quickly gravitate toward coaching during his college days.

Tyre's first gig out of college was as a social studies teacher and coach at **Bunn High School** in N.C. in 1978. His dream was to become a "big-time head basketball coach." By 1989 he was at **Southern Nash HS** in Bailey, N.C., coaching four sports with some success, but ultimately not completely satisfying.

It took then-Southern Nash AD **Ray Davis** to change and reset Coach Tyre's focus. "He said, 'Your strength is coaching track.' I needed to embrace that." Tyre knew how to identify talent, and he was getting better and better at developing it. That first became clear in '79 at Bunn when he helped a barely known rising star named **William Baker** get a scholarship at St. Augustine College with legendary Coach George Williams – where he would unexpectedly become an NAIA All-American. "That kind of put me on the map," he said. "I do know talent when I see it."

Coach Tyre didn't know everything there was to know about the sport, but he knew if you wanted to get better, you learned from the best. He connected with track and field coaching legends like **George Williams** at St. Augustine College, and **Dr. Russell Blunt**. Like Tyre, Blunt juggled basketball and track.

It's not surprising that Tyre's greatest success during his Southern Nash years came while **Julius Peppers** was on his team in in the late 1990s. Peppers' story is legend from those parts – not just that he would later become a UNC All-American and 3-time first team All-Pro NFL star, but that he didn't even try football until his sophomore year in high school. But Peppers had long loved hoops, and T&F was up there, too. Even better, Coach Tyre loved the type of kid Peppers was. "He would make plays or have performances where you say, 'I didn't believe what I just saw.' You didn't trust your own eyes … But Julius was never full of himself. He was just one of the guys." And, despite being 6-7 and 255 pounds, according to Tyre, he was 2nd in the state meet triple jump and ran on the winning 4x400. Then Southern Nash defended its title in 1999, after Peppers had graduated.

Coach Tyre was at Southern Nash for 17 years, through the 2006 season, but the 164-mile round trip daily commute had been wearing on him and it was time to work a little closer to home. He loved the school, but that summer he took teaching and coaching positions at Southeast Guilford – and went about building a great program again.

During the 2012 indoor season, Tyre's boys' squad tied for the state title with Knightdale. Then in 2016, the coach was surprised and delighted when his school's big early-season meet was renamed the **Alton Tyre Invitational Relays.**
"A lot of my former athletes were there," he said. "It was an incredible day."

Hopefully, June 18, 2017 will be just as incredible a day for Alton Tyre.

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Julius Peppers calls it a career



JULIUS PEPPERS

Mark Cone •
Southern Nash graduate and Carolina Panthers defensive end Julius Peppers is hanging up his helmet. Peppers, who currently is fourth on the NFL's all-time sack list, announced his retirement after 17 NFL seasons on Friday.

Hailing from Bailey, NC Peppers, 39, is heavily favored as a first-ballot NFL Hall of Fame selection in five years when he becomes eligible to receive the honor.

In his NFL career which included stints with The Chicago Bears and Green Bay Packers before returning home to where he started his career in Charlotte Peppers' total 159.5 career sacks putting him firmly in the fourth place position over Terrell Suggs of the Baltimore Raven who has 132.5. Peppers trails Kevin Greene by only .5 at 160. Bruce Smith (198) and Reggie White (200) round out the elite top five.

Across 17 seasons Peppers missed only six games, amassing a game playing total of 266 making him the sixth highest in games played by defensive player during their career in NFL history. Peppers is ending his career by playing 176 consecutive games, the second-longest active streak among active players behind NC State alum and Chargers quarterback Phillip Rivers.

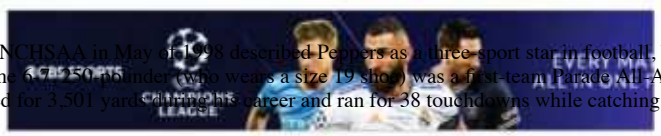
Peppers said his goodbye to fans worldwide in a video release that said:

"Thank you. For the victories and the good times," Peppers said in a video announcing his retirement. "For the lessons and the times we desired more. For the sacrifices, the belief, the confidence and the unwavering support - I'm thankful. Because without you, this wasn't possible. Thank you for the spirit, the resolve and the attitude to Keep Pounding. It's not something we just say around here, it's how we live. I'm thankful for the things you showed me about life that were bigger than football and for a second chance - a new beginning. See the players, we come and we go, but the constant is you. And as the saying goes, 'Once a Panther, always a Panther.' Thank you for the memories, the friendships, the laughs and the culture we created. For the understanding and for being family. Thanks for all the years, and cheers. And for being home now and forever. I wouldn't change a thing about this journey. It was the best teacher I've ever had and was everything I could've hoped for. The tough times never lasted and the tough people inspired me to be better and give more. I hope I did the same. Only time can reveal what's next, but my time here is up. No regrets, no looking back and nothing left to give. It's not goodbye, it's kinda like, 'I'll see you later' But until then I'm grateful, I'm satisfied and at peace with all that comes next."

"Julius is one of the greatest to ever play the game of football," head coach Ron Rivera said in a statement. "To put up the numbers he did for as long as he did speaks to his incredible talent and commitment. He is a leader in the locker room and in the community. Getting to know him over the last two seasons has been tremendous because of the type of person he is. What he did for the people affected by Hurricane Florence, getting involved and bringing them hope, says a lot about who he is. I'm proud that I get to say that I was one of his coaches, and I think it's fitting that he gets to end his career as a Carolina Panther."

Peppers started his football journey in a small metal building that served as the field house for Southern Nash High School in the fall of 1994. In 1995 as a sophomore he emerged as one of the premier high school running backs in the state gaining 1044 yards and scoring 15 touchdowns in his first year of varsity play. He finished his career with 3501 total rushing yards, which put him in the number two position behind Lamont Avent, he now sits in the number six position on that list.

By the time he graduated in 1998, Peppers had been named the NCHSAA male athlete of the year for his performance in football, basketball, and track. He is one of only two Firebirds to receive statewide Athlete of the Year honors in school history. He was also the first Firebird to be named as an All-American.



An article published by the NCHSAA in May of 1998 described Peppers as a three-sport star in football, basketball and track, headed to the University of North Carolina on a football scholarship. The 6'5", 245-pounder (who wears a size 19 shoe) was a first-team Parade All-American in '97 and was his team's Most Valuable Player for three consecutive years. He rushed for 3,501 yards [illegible] career and ran for 38 touchdowns while catching passes for six more scores.

In basketball, he was the Big Eight Conference Player of the Year in 1996 and finished his career with the Firebirds with over 1,600 career points, 1,000 career rebounds and over 500 assists. He earned all-conference honors and all-area honors all four years he played. In track, he competes in four events, including the triple jump, shot put, 400 meters and the four by 100 relay, and was third in the state meet in the triple jump in 1996.

Former Southern Nash Football Coach and athletic director Ray Davis of Southern Nash says that Julius "is the most unselfish individual I have ever coached. He is truly a phenom."

Longtime Southern Nash Head Coach Brian Foster was an assistant coach at the school until the year Peppers graduated. "Julius...to me he is not Julius Peppers the NFL star, he is just Julius...is one of the most genuine people you will ever know," said Foster. "The things with the Hurricane victims recently, that is genuine Julius...that's not a photo op, he truly cares and he has always been very caring and giving. He has done things for people and schools and communities that nobody will ever know about, he doesn't want credit - that's just the person he is. When Kim and Zack were in the wreck Julius showed up at the hospital - he didn't have to do that, but he did and nobody ever knew it."

As a senior at Southern Nash, Peppers selected “The greatness of work is inside man” as his senior quote. He played his college career at UNC where he was awarded the Chuck Bednarik Award, the Bill Willis Trophy, and the Lombardi Award. He is ranked second in All-Time UNC history for 30.5 sacks.

Peppers also is in a rare class of athlete that has played in both an NCAA Final Four and the Super Bowl. A search of sports history could find only one other athlete, Donovan McNabb that was part of a team that was in both, but McNabb did not see Final Four playing time as a walk-on reserve at Syracuse, making Peppers the only athlete to have actually played in both.

Peppers was nominated by the Carolina Panthers for this year’s Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award for his humanitarian efforts in eastern North Carolina after two devastating hurricanes left the area in ruins in the fall of 2018. The winner of that award will be announced this Saturday at NFL Honors in Atlanta.

"He did things the right way, which is what we try to get all of our athletes at Southern Nash to do," said Foster. "He associated with the right people, he worked hard, and he had a great career. I am really proud of Julius for all his accomplishments as an athlete and a family man, I am thankful that he stayed healthy so that now he can enjoy what he has earned."

Reader Comments

Jill

FEB 01, 2019 • Can I come and work for y'all? Your writing is grammatically incorrect three times in the first paragraph! **Publisher's note: The first 'paragraph' is two sentences long. I did review those two sentences and did not find any grammatical errors in them. In response to your request; at this time I would have to respectfully decline as the use of the word "ya'll" is never considered grammatically correct in the English language.**

submit your comments

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FOOTBALL

WRAL Storytellers: Julius Peppers in his unbelievably dominant days in high school

Tags: Julius Peppers, football, High School Football



Julius Peppers as a high school running back!?!? Former WRAL sports director Bob Holliday shares tales on how much bigger, stronger and faster Peppers was in the mid-1990s at Southern Nash compared to his opponents.

Reporter: Jared Fialko

8:06 p.m., Jun 21, 2020

Hide Transcript

Transcript:

RUSSELL WILSON MAKES $35 MILLION, AND BIG BEN $34 MILLION. >>> THE FORMER PANTHERS SACHAR, JULIUS PEPPERS, ONE OF THOSE IN THE RUNNING FOR THE HALL OF FAME, BUT HIS CAREER HAD QUITE A DIFFERENT START, AS WE EXPLAIN IN THIS EDITION OF WRAL STORYTELLERS. >> ONE OF THE BIGGEST ASSETS, THE MOUNT KILIMANJARO LEVEL OF PLASTIC WE HAVE THAT IS THE ARCHIVES, BUT I DON'T KNOW IF ANYBODY HAS SHOWN ME A CLIP THAT HAS MADE MY JAW DROP TO THE FLOOR AS MUCH AS THE TIME SOMEONE SHOWED ME A PIECE OF VIDEO FROM SOUTHERN NASH HIGH SCHOOL WHERE JULIUS PEPPERS WAS PLAYING RUNNING BACK.>> QUITE SIMPLY, JULIUS PEPPERS IS ONE OF THE GREATEST ATHLETES THE STATE HAS EVER TURNED OUT, WE SAW THAT HIS FRESHMAN YEAR, THE COACH WAS DETERMINED TO PERSUADE HIM TO GIVE FOOTBALL A TRY, AND I DON'T KNOW THIS FOR SURE, I HAVE AN IDEA THAT HE OFFERED JULIUS THE CHANCE TO PLAY WHEREVER HE WANTED AS AN ENTICEMENT. JULIUS CHOSE RUNNING BACK, HE TOLD ME I WANT TO TOUCH THE BALL AND HAVE SOME FUN.>> Reporter: SUCH A LARGE RUNNING BACK AT SOUTHERN NASH, NORTH CAROLINA RECRUITED HIM FOR DEFENSIVE END. >> WHEN YOU ARE ON THE SIDELINES FOR FOOTBALL FRIDAY, HOW DO NOT GET CAUGHT UP IN THE SPECTACLE. >> SPELLBINDING, HE COULD GET 7 YARDS, 12 YARDS.>> Reporter: A 21 YARD TOUCHDOWN PASS TO JULIUS PEPPERS. JULIUS PEPPERS WILL GO 47 YARDS. >> THEY HAD A TRADITION OF BIG RUNNING BACKS, THEY HAD A GUY NAMED ABE JONES, AND JULIUS WAS 6 FOOT SEVEN, 250 AS A SOPHOMORE, THE COACH TOLD ME. >> HE RAN A FOUR POINTS SIX 40, HE COULD GET TO THE CORNER BEFORE OTHER BIG GUYS. 4.6, AND I SAID IS IT OKAY TO DRAG THEM, AND HE SAID YES, THEY GET AROUND MY ANKLES, I LIKE TO DRAG THEM AS FAR AS THEY CAN, HE WOULD DRAG DEFENDERS FOR 3500 YARDS AND 38 TOUCHDOWNS. >> IT'S WILD, HE'S LIKE TWICE THE SIZE OF MOST OF THE PLAYERS. >> THAT WAS OUTRAGEOUS.

MORE ON THIS

- Mack Brown, Julius Peppers among NC Sports Hall of Fame 2020 class
- Julius Peppers among NFF College Football Hall of Fame nominees
- Julius Peppers: 'It's see ya later' in retirement from Carolina Panthers

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2018 NFL Man of the Year – Fact Sheet

Link to the Application
Link to application here: http://www.nflfoundation.org/applications/programs/campaign/MOY

How has your nominee shown dedication and commitment to community efforts this year?

Always someone who has aimed to avoid the spotlight, Panthers defensive end Julius Peppers has never enjoyed the talking-to-the-media part of being an NFL player.
He prefers to talk when he has something to say.
After seeing the photos and videos of the hurricane damage along the coast, Peppers, who grew up in eastern North Carolina and played football (and basketball) at UNC, had something to say and wanted to help.
He partnered with the Foundation for the Carolinas and started the Julius Peppers Hurricane Florence relief fund by donating $100,000 and encouraging his teammates and other NFL players to do their part, as well.
"I think it would be a great statement if we had 100 percent participation," Peppers said of fellow Panthers supporting the cause. "To be honest, I think that would say a lot to these fans and the community. We rely on their support every week to come to the games and buy our jerseys. It's only right for us to give the same support back to the them and help them in their time of need."
Funds will be directed to nonprofit recipients of grants from Foundation For The Carolinas' Hurricane Florence Response Fund, which is providing relief to victims of the storm.
"When these disasters happen you don't have the basic necessities. Sometimes we take those things for granted," Peppers said. "That's what's on my mind. I'm just trying to do something to help."
However, his donation was only the beginning of his commitment. Since his donation, he's spent two of his off-days visiting hurricane-ravaged areas - Robeson County in North Carolina and Marlboro County in South Carolina, both impoverished areas that reminded him of his hometown where people were too busy picking up the pieces of their lives to gawk at an NFL star.
Peppers understood. And he wasn't too busy to listen, to help, to take the time in the midst of the football season to travel five hours roundtrip to see how he could assist in some small way those struggling in the wake of a natural disaster.
"Home is a couple of hours away, and it reminds me of Bailey a lot," Peppers said, referencing his North Carolina hometown that was spared when Hurricane Florence tore through his home state three-plus weeks ago. "It hits home. It's tough to see people in these situations. They're just regular people who don't have very much to fall back on, don't have many resources.
"It's one thing to write a check. That's great, but it's another thing to come out, be on the ground and actually see the devastation, see the effects with your own eyes."

How has your nominee shown dedication and commitment to community efforts in years past?

Historically someone who prefers to contribute "behind the scenes," Peppers has donated more than $300,000 to the University of North Carolina's Light on the Hill Society Scholarship fund that supports African-American students. Peppers gave $100,000 to the fund in 2009 and $250,000 to the fund in 2012. The scholarship program is a tribute to Carolina's earliest African-American graduates and a vehicle for alumni and friends of the university to support African-American freshman who exhibit academic excellence and the potential to contribute while at UNC and after graduation. The Light on the Hill Society Julius Peppers Scholar receives an annual 1,000 award, renewable for up to three years.

Peppers has made donations to various churches in Charlotte, Nash County (NC), Houston and Dallas for projects, including youth development, transportation, radio devotionals and building repair. From 2005-08, he funded the Julius Pepper Project, youth development programs in Charlotte, Nash County and Chapel Hill that secured motivational speakers to discuss social and educational issues with area youth.

In Chicago from 2010-12, he made financial contributions and organized youth development through Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Chicago.

How does your nominee demonstrate consistency in positive character and how does he model a lifestyle of giving back?

Selected to the All-Decade team for the 2000's, Peppers is universally regarded by teammates and players throughout the League as one of the game's great ambassadors and someone who plays the game "the right way." Reflective of his positive leadership and the respect he garners from his teammates, Peppers has been selected a team captain six times, including four seasons in Carolina and twice in Chicago. During his three-year stint in Green Bay, the Packers did not select captains for the season but was selected as one of the team's postseason captains in each of his three seasons with the team.
While he is a star player in the NFL, Peppers has always been reserved in his demeanor. However, he recognized the need to help others in the aftermath of Hurricane Florence and has devoted his resources and, more importantly, his time to helping the low-income rural areas that are often left behind in relief efforts.

How has your nominee demonstrated excellence on the field during his career?

Selected by the Panthers second overall in the 2002 draft, Julius Peppers is the only player in NFL history with 150 sacks and 10 or more interceptions. He (156.5) leads all active players in sacks, including an all-time franchise record of 94 with the Panthers. The 17-year veteran needs four to surpass Kevin Greene (160.0) for third in NFL history since sacks became an official statistic in 1982. He needs two forced fumbles to surpass Robert Mathis (52) for the most forced fumbles since 2000 and his 33 career forced fumbles for Carolina rank first in team history. With one more game played, he will increase his total to 256, an amount that ranks sixth in NFL history among defensive players. Peppers has also played in 166 consecutive games, the second-longest streak among active players.

Is there anything else we should know about your nominee?

JULIUS PEPPERS – DEFENSIVE END (2002-2009, 2017-2018)

Honors

- NFL All-Decade Team – 2000s, 2010s
- Pro Bowl – **2004**, **2005**, **2006**, **2008**, **2009**, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015
- AP All-Pro First Team – **2004**, **2006**, 2010
- AP All-Pro Second Team – **2008**, **2009**, 2012
- College & Pro Football Weekly All-Pro – **2004**
- Football Digest All-Pro – **2004**
- Pro Football Weekly All-NFL – **2004**, **2006**, 2010
- Pro Football Weekly All-NFC – **2004**, **2006**, 2010, 2012
- Sporting News All-Pro – **2004**, **2006**, **2008**, 2010
- NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year – **2002**
- USA Today Sports Weekly All-Pro – **2006**

(Bold =With Panthers)

NFL Superlatives

- 266 games played are the sixth most by a defensive player in NFL history.
- Ranks fourth in NFL history with 159.5 sacks.
- Finished in top 10 in NFL in sacks six times – 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2012.
- Produced 10 seasons with double-digit sacks, the fourth most in NFL history.
- Only player in NFL history with 150 or more sacks and 10 or more interceptions.
- 11 career interceptions are the second most by a defensive end in NFL history.
- Ranks second in NFL history with 51 forced fumbles (since 2000 when the statistic became available).
- Credited with 82 career pass deflections, the second most in NFL history by a defensive end (since 2000 when the statistic became available).

Panthers Accomplishments

- Led/tied for team lead in sacks seven times – 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2017.
- Recorded a career-high 14.5 sacks in 2008, equaling the third most in team history.
- Totaled 143 interception return yards in 2004, the second most in team history and an NFL record for a defensive lineman at the time.
- Key member of Panthers defense that finished in top 10 six times – 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2017.
- Helped Panthers defense rank among the NFL's top 10 in sacks per pass attempt five times – 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2017.
- Named Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year nominee in 2018.

Panthers Team History Ranks

- 5 Pro Bowls – 2nd (Tied)
- 97 Sacks – 1st
- 23 Multi-Sack Games – 1st
- 583 Tackles – Most by a defensive lineman
- 34 Forced Fumbles – 1st
- 10 Opponent Fumble Recoveries – 3rd
- 9 Blocked Field Goals – 1st

Career Statistics – Season-By-Season

Year	Team	GP	GS	Tot	T	A	Sack	Yds	Int	PD	FF	FR	TD
2002	Carolina	12	12	54	37	17	12.0	78.0	1	4	5	0	0
2003	Carolina	16	16	65	48	17	7.0	39.0	0	6	3	0	0
2004	Carolina	16	16	85	63	22	11.0	71.0	2	6	4	1	1
2005	Carolina	16	16	70	46	24	10.5	61.5	0	4	2	1	0
2006	Carolina	16	16	75	61	14	13.0	89.0	0	6	3	2	0
2007	Carolina	14	14	55	37	18	2.5	22.5	1	3	3	2	0
2008	Carolina	16	16	63	41	22	14.5	82.5	0	7	5	0	0
2009	Carolina	16	14	56	35	21	10.5	52.5	2	4	5	1	1
2010	Chicago	16	16	64	47	17	8.0	54.0	2	7	3	0	0
2011	Chicago	16	16	43	31	12	11.0	60.0	0	1	3	2	0
2012	Chicago	16	16	43	33	10	11.5	73.5	0	0	1	4	0
2013	Chicago	16	16	47	35	12	7.0	44.0	1	4	2	1	0
2014	Green Bay	16	16	45	33	12	7.0	41.5	2	11	4	3	2
2015	Green Bay	16	16	42	31	11	10.5	57.0	0	0	2	0	0
2016	Green Bay	16	11	30	22	8	7.5	47.5	0	3	2	1	0
2017	Carolina	16	5	33	27	6	11.0	61.0	0	0	2	2	0
2018	Carolina	16	8	27	19	8	5.0	47.5	0	7	2	1	0
Career Totals		**266**	**240**	**897**	**646**	**251**	**159.5**	**982.0**	**11**	**73**	**51**	**21**	**4**
Carolina Totals		**154**	**133**	**583**	**414**	**169**	**97.0**	**604.5**	**6**	**47**	**34**	**10**	**2**

Julius Peppers caps year of community service with celebration at charity sneaker ball

Feb 15, 2019 at 09:27 AM



Max Henson

CHARLOTTE – For Julius Peppers, Thursday night at the Harvey B. Gantt Center was the culmination of nearly a year's worth of community service.

Peppers, who was Carolina's 2018 NFL Man of the Year nominee, hosted a formal sneaker ball in support of three charities that he handpicked.

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"I'm excited. All this stuff started out with the hurricane relief fund," Peppers said just before the party began. "We decided to do a charity ball for All-Star Weekend with the spotlight on the city of Charlotte and we wanted to celebrate as well.

"It's great to go out and have a good time and also have it benefit a good cause. That means a lot."

Peppers, usually known for backing away from the spotlight, was basking in the glow throughout the night. Since announcing his retirement, he's been overwhelmed by the collective love and support, and he was happy to mingle with guests and pose for a photo with anyone who asked.

This was a charity event, but it was also a chance to celebrate the close of a legendary career.

Several coveted pieces of sports memorabilia were up for grabs at the event. Among the items on display? A Steph Curry signed jersey, a signed Saquon Barkley helmet, a Drew Brees autographed ball and a signed Patrick Mahomes jersey.

And of course, several current and former Panthers were on hand to share in the celebration.

Julius Peppers Charity Sneaker Ball

View photos from Julius Peppers' charity sneaker ball in Charlotte at the Harvey B. Gantt Center.



1 / 89

Brandon Todd

"A lot of support from my teammates, well, former teammates," Peppers said with a chuckle. "Everyone has been congratulating me on a great career and it feels good to be appreciated."

The community is certainly appreciative of Peppers for all the work he's done during and after his final NFL season.

Here's what he had to say about the three charitable organizations his gala supported:

"The Young Black Leadership Alliance – they give exposure to youth locally and around the world. I thought they were great when I went out and visited them. I fell in love with it."

"The Girl Talk Foundation is run by someone that I know from my first stint with the Panthers. They are empowering young girls to be strong women. It's great."

"The Center for Community Transitions – they offer stability and assistance to families dealing with someone who has been incarcerated. A lot of people deal with that at one point or another, and that hit home for me.

Best NC Athlete ever? How about Julius Peppers

https://www.wralsportsfan.com/best-nc-athlete-ever-how-about-julius-peppers/19204859/

Posted July 25, 2020 4:54 p.m. EDT
Updated July 27, 2020 6:44 a.m. EDT
By Bob Holliday, WRALSportsFan columnist

RALEIGH, N.C. — Recently I stumbled onto a social media thread asking opinions about the best high school athletes who competed in North Carolina. I immediately thought of Julius Peppers.

It's not just the fact that Peppers ran for more than 3500 yards and 38 touchdowns in three years as a running back at Southern Nash High School, though I must say the images of the big teenager running over and even running past would be defenders are indelible. But Peppers was about more than just running the ball, and he was about more than just football. In fact, until his sophomore year, there was no football.

Peppers, as a freshman, made his mark at the school in Stanhope on the basketball court and on the track. He would ultimately score 1661 points and haul in almost 960 rebounds playing hoops. The sport of track and field afforded Peppers even more ways to showcase his extraordinary gifts. He helped the Firebirds win the NCHSAA 3A Championship in two entirely different ways: He ran one leg of Southern Nash's first place 4x400 meter relay team; then as an individual he competed in the triple jump and finished second in the state. Ironically, it was the triple jump that brought Peppers and Southern Nash football coach Ray Davis together.

Davis one day watched Peppers practicing the triple jump-he fashioned a distance of 37 feet even as a freshman. Davis told Peppers he needed to come out for football the next fall. Legend has it Davis promised Peppers he could be a Hall of Famer if he worked hard.

Julius joined the Firebird football squad in the fall of 1995. Perhaps as part of the enticement to get him on the gridiron, Davis allowed Peppers to play any position he wanted. The sophomore chose running back.

Now Southern Nash has some tradition playing big running backs. In the early Nineties the Firebirds unleashed the 6'4 240 pound Abe Jones on opposing defenses. But as Davis later told me, "Julius makes Abe look like a little baby." Indeed. Peppers stood 6'7 and weighed 250 pounds. But his prowess was about more than size. He ran a 4.6 40 yard dash, which gave him the speed to get around those players big enough to tackle him-and there weren't many. He also had the strength to drag smaller tacklers for extra yards, often many extra yards. Think of Gulliver in the land of the Lilliputians in Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels."

Ray Davis understood that ultimately Peppers would be playing against men more his own size in college and beyond, and that that might warrant a position change. Yet he believed that for Southern Nash, using Peppers primarily as a ball carrier, helped the team more than putting him somewhere else.

As for Julius, I asked him why he chose running back. "I want to touch the ball, have fun," he told me.

Southern Nash, like many high schools, makes use of two way players. Davis experimented with playing Peppers at defensive end. As his stamina improved, the big guy played more and more defense. By his senior year, Peppers played every down on defense. Although he was still the team's running back it just made sense to give the burgeoning number of recruiters a thorough look at a potential college superstar defensive end.

On to Chapel Hill

Peppers understood his future lay in the trenches but the amount of time he spent playing running back meant that he arrived at UNC having taken fewer reps at defensive end than if he had specialized. As things turned out, Peppers red-shirted during the 1998 season in Chapel Hill, which gave him time to focus full-time on defensive end-for the first time.

Peppers started for Coach Carl Torbush from the very first game in 1999, even though his techniques for defeating college level blocks needed some refinement. His size and quickness more than compensated for what he might have lacked in knowhow. He caught on quickly-also got busy in the weight room. The 250 pound high school running back became a 290 pound college defensive end.

#49 led the Tar Heels in sacks and tackles for loss that first campaign (he didn't become #90 until the NFL), then put together a monster season in 2000. Peppers led the entire

country in sacks with 15 and ranked third in tackles for loss with 24. Though just a sophomore, he made All-ACC and All-America.

John Bunting, a top NFL defensive coach, took over as head coach at UNC in 2001, leading the Tar Heels to an eight win season that included a bowl victory over Auburn. Peppers again flourished despite facing frequent double teams. He won the Bednarik and Lombardi Awards as the nation's top defensive player, and made unanimous All-America. He finished tenth in balloting for the Heisman Trophy. Having scaled college football's highest heights, Peppers entered the NFL draft for 2002.

Bunting wanted NFL scouts to get a good look at this big athletic defensive end. He organized a pro timing day for Peppers, Ryan Sims, and UNC's other NFL prospects. Scouts spent time evaluating Peppers' skill at trench warfare; there was a lot of hand fighting that day I remember. Peppers impressed the Carolina Panthers enough that they used the #2 pick in the entire draft on him.

Julius Peppers' three year legacy at UNC compares favorably with any in school history, even those who played four varsity seasons. He ranks second in career sacks with 30 and second in career tackles for loss with 53. But that's just the beginning. He was credited with 42 quarterback hurries. He defended 13 passes, an extraordinary number for a defensive end, deflecting the ball while rushing the passer on most of the 13, but he was also known to drop back into coverage. Peppers forced five fumbles and recovered two more. He intercepted five passes. And when he got his hands on the football, Julius knew what to do with it-he was first a running back after all. Peppers scored three defensive touchdowns at UNC. Small wonder he was recently nominated for the College Football Hall of Fame.

Basketball, too

On top of his football accolades, Peppers in 2001 was voted the top two sport athlete in America by the Sporting News. A former all state basketball player at Southern Nash, Peppers joined Bill Guthridge's team as a walk on following the 1999 football season. It took some time for Peppers to adapt his now 290 pound body to the hardwood, as well as to learn the nuances of UNC's offensive and defensive principles. But as January lapsed into February and March, Peppers saw more and more playing time.

The football star certainly won over his basketball teammates. That was evident in a television story we did in 2000. Point guard and team leader Ed Cota was Peppers' biggest booster. "I played a lot of pickup with Julius this summer," Cota said, "and I knew what he was capable of doing out there." Peppers confided that "Ed was telling me all the time you can play on our team." Did he ever!

Peppers came off the bench and got rebounds at both ends of the court. As you might imagine, he excelled at defense, making steals and blocking shots. He could also put the ball in the basket, hitting all four shots in a game at Duke and knocking down 6-7 in a 14 point outing against Georgia Tech. As teammate Joe Forte put it, “Julius is the best athlete I’ve seen in my life. The sad part is he’s just playing the game for fun.”

Peppers probably had the most fun in his brief college basketball career one March Saturday against #1 seed Stanford. The Cardinal boasted a huge front line, three players 6’10 or bigger, all of whom were quite muscular. Carolina countered with 7’0 Brendan Haywood and Kris Lang, who although 6’10 was more of a finesse player. Peppers, who played with both Haywood and Lang in their AAU days, became the great equalizer against Stanford. Peppers, by now known as the “super sub,” came off the bench late in the first half against the Cardinal and converted a critical three point play to give UNC a 28-27 lead at intermission-and belief in the possibility of an upset. Peppers played most of the second half, 24 minutes in all, recording six points, three rebounds, two steals, and three blocked shots.

North Carolina, a 20-13 team some said didn’t even belong in the NCAA Tournament, took down 27-4 Stanford 60-53.UNC’s interior defense, led by Peppers, held the Cardinal’s formidable front court to 7-29 from the floor. As Bill Guthridge was later to say, “Julius Peppers has been a godsend to our team. We wouldn’t be here without Julius.”

That UNC team went all the way to the Final Four in Guthridge’s final season. Peppers played an even greater role as a sophomore, averaging 7 points and 4 rebounds. Impressively, he led the team in field goal percentage, hitting 64% of his shots from the floor. Peppers so impressed new coach Matt Doherty that he suggested if Julius gave up football and concentrated solely on basketball he could be an NBA player. Peppers, of course, went in precisely the opposite direction.

No one who watched his Hall of Fame worthy NFL career could ever second guess his decision to concentrate on football, yet the notion that he could possibly have had a pro career in a different sport adds another layer to the legacy of one of America’s great all around athletes.

Favorite memory

My favorite memory covering Mr. Peppers comes from Super Bowl Media Day in 2004. Members of the media know Julius never sought the spotlight. He wanted to let his play speak for itself and let his teammates do the talking. When Julius gave interviews he answered questions thoughtfully, but quietly. As he became an NFL veteran, Peppers did fewer and fewer interviews. But on Tuesday in Houston, five days before the

Panthers' showdown with the New England Patriots, Peppers made himself available. There were just a few of us at Peppers' booth. Most crowded around Jake Delhomme and Steve Smith. I practically had a one on one with the Panthers' young star.

"Julius," I said, "as you look all the way back to your days as a running back for Coach Ray Davis at Southern Nash, can you put into words what getting the chance to play in the Super Bowl means to you?"The smile on his face said it all. I never shall forget that smile.

CHICAGO'S LEAP OF FAITH

HTTPS://VAULT.SI.COM/VAULT/2010/09/06/CHICAGOS-LEAP-OF-FAITH

- **DAMON HACK**

GETTING TO THE QUARTERBACK IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER, WHICH IS WHY THE BEARS TOOK A $91.5 MILLION CHANCE ON DEFENSIVE END JULIUS PEPPERS—HIS CRITICS BE DAMNED

When the wind blew, the tobacco stalks would shake and the trailer in which Julius Peppers lived would rock. In his bed, which was too short for his long legs, he would sometimes lie still and listen to that double-wide groan. But other times the growing boy would rise, duck his head beneath the low roof and take off with the gusts blowing through Bailey, N.C. "Running to get in shape," he says, "or just running for no reason."

He was impossible to miss: 6'3" by the time he was in middle school, already broad and thick and muscular. Just about everyone in Bailey (pop. 670), famous for its Country Doctor Museum, knew of Julius's sporting prowess and quiet nature. One youth coach would pick him up at home for a game, and a different coach might drop him off afterward. On certain days the townsfolk would talk about what Julius could do on the basketball court. Other times it was Julius and that football. And sometimes it was Julius running around that oval. All the while Julius's mother, Bessie Brinkley, worked long hours in a ceramics shop.

"I've known Julius since the fifth grade," says Alton Tyre, who coached him in track and field at Southern Nash High. "I was in Wilmington when Michael Jordan was there. I coached against Clyde Simmons. Julius is the greatest athlete I have ever seen. A guy that big and that strong is not supposed to be that fast."

Julius was one of the few not trumpeting his gifts. Although he was already bigger than almost everyone he met, he was happy to share the spotlight, even when many of the people in the bleachers just wanted to see him dunk. "He was very introspective and reserved," Tyre says. "I taught him African-American history and U.S. history, and he used to answer essay questions with a level of depth you don't see from a lot of kids. At the eastern regional track meet when he was a sophomore, this kid took the lead on him in the triple jump and starts pointing at Julius's chest, as if to say, You're not man enough to do what I did. Julius gets on the track with these beautiful phases and jumps 46' 11½" to beat the kid. Julius got out of that sand and didn't say a word. He didn't even look at the kid. He just walked around the track with his teammates, high-fiving."

Asked about his muted response to his own athletic feats, Peppers says, "I think I was just born like that, a personality trait. I'm an observer."

Peppers's power and perspective helped make him an All-America defensive end at North Carolina (where he also walked on to the basketball team), an All-Pro with the Panthers and, last March, the key free-agent pickup of the off-season. When he signed a six-year, $91.5 million deal with the Bears it underscored the importance of the pass rusher in the era of the quarterback. Chicago already had the face of its franchise in middle linebacker Brian Urlacher, but Peppers gave the team a big-play threat—a player with strength, speed and quickness honed on the track and the basketball court as well as the football field. "I'm sure every sport he [competed in] played a part in what he's able to do," says Brian Foster, who was Peppers's defensive coordinator at Southern Nash, "but he always had that first step and that freakish ability. I think his burst is from God."

Just as significant, signing with the Bears ended Peppers's 30 years in North Carolina, during which he had been called everything from a boyhood legend to the greatest pass rusher since Lawrence Taylor to an underachiever who didn't bring it on every play. The charge that Peppers's fire didn't always match his physical gifts first surfaced shortly before the Panthers drafted him second overall out of UNC—despite the fact that he used to run sprints with the defensive backs because his fellow linemen were too slow. The talk was heard as recently as last season, when with the Panthers off to an 0--3 start, linebacker Jon Beason told a radio station that he wanted to see more "intensity" from Peppers. The following week Beason said he had been wrong to go public with a team matter, and both players and coaches came to Peppers's defense. "I never saw the kid take a practice off," says Browns quarterback Jake Delhomme, a teammate of Peppers's in Carolina for seven seasons. "I never saw him miss a practice in training camp. I never saw him miss practice during the season. I never saw him gloat. He came to play, he came to work. Julius is a quiet guy, and people might misunderstand him because he keeps to himself."

Delhomme remembers that the negative chatter about Peppers was loudest in 2007, when Peppers had just 2½ sacks. "We were 7--9, and he was just crucified," Delhomme says. "People seem to forget, we weren't winning games, so teams were running the ball late in the game and you're not going to get sacks. And then the next year he has a good year [a career-high 14½ sacks], but we were 12--4 and teams had to throw it. You have to look at the big picture."

Peppers says the criticism used to bother him, but he understands that it's inevitable, given his nature. "You can be an emotional, high-strung guy, and that might work for you," he says. "I think I can be reserved and quiet and play as well as the next guy."

Sal Sunseri, the linebackers coach at Alabama, was a Panthers' defensive coach from 2002 to '08. "There was never a guy I coached who was better prepared," Sunseri says. "Sometimes a young man gets frustrated when they're sliding protection over and doing everything they can to block his ass. When you're the top dog, they're doing everything they can to keep you from the

quarterback. If you're an offensive coordinator, you better know how you're going to block Julius Peppers."

Even though he had allies among the Panthers, Peppers admits he had been thinking about leaving Carolina for two years. After he turned down a four-year, $54 million offer from the team before the 2009 season, the Panthers placed a franchise tag on him, which meant he made more than $18 million last year. This season, citing financial reasons, the organization decided against using its franchise tag on him (it would have cost more than $20 million), leaving Peppers free to test the market.

Departing meant leaving behind a remarkable legacy of triumph—and controversy. Peppers was named Defensive Rookie of the Year for 2002 after a season in which he had 12 sacks in 12 games, but he missed Carolina's last four games for violating league policy on banned substances. (Peppers, who has said the positive test was the result of a diet supplement containing ephedra that he obtained from a friend, called it "crazy" for people to think he needed steroids to boost his performance.) The following season he helped lead Carolina to the Super Bowl, which the Panthers lost to New England on a late Adam Vinatieri field goal. Carolina hasn't made it that far since.

"It was time for a change, not only from that franchise but from the state," says the 30-year-old Peppers. "I'm from a small town, and I've lived in Charlotte, which is really a small city and a small town too, but I've never lived in a big city or had to perform under the spotlight in one. That's a challenge in itself. I like those things. I wasn't going to shy away."

Peppers has quickly warmed to Chicago, where he plans to start a foundation to help at-risk young men. He also embraced the city's fast pace: Following his introductory press conference in March, Peppers ventured out to the club Crescendo and bought 25 bottles of Perrier Jouet Fleur de Champagne (about $350 per bottle) for the patrons. Captured on YouTube, it's a big-city moment light years from Bailey: As bottles lit by sparklers are passed around the room, the DJ can be heard shouting his appreciation over the thumping sound system. "Make some noise for the new Chicago Bear, J. Peppers in the building!" the DJ says. "Super Bowl, next year, 2010, Chicago Bears. Thank you, Julius."

The Bears see Peppers as a complete defensive end who can help stop the run and cause general discomfort to opposing offenses, but it's his ability to pressure the quarterback that makes him most valuable. "Our scheme is predicated on the pass rush," says Chicago general manager Jerry Angelo. "We think third down on first down, so a player of Julius's skill set really accentuates what we want to do on defense."

His teammates are already getting a taste of the discomfort Peppers can cause. At a recent practice he lined up at right end. At the snap he engaged the left tackle, freed himself, rushed the

quarterback, leaped into the air as the quarterback threw a screen pass into the flat, spun around and chased down the running back, who saw the ball sail over his head. Peppers did it all so quickly that he made it look easy.

"You go up to block him, and you don't expect to get pushed back, because it doesn't look like he's coming off real hard," says Bears tight end Desmond Clark. "Then you lock onto him, and you find yourself backpedaling. As soon as you meet that force and he's pushing you back, it doesn't matter what it looks like. It didn't look hard for Michael Jordan, but he always got it done."

Urlacher shakes his head. "Three hundred damn pounds," he says. "I don't know how a man his size moves as good as he does. This dude busts his ass every day. I don't understand [the criticism]. The expectations for him are so high, people wanting him to get a sack every single play—you can't do it."

Coach Lovie Smith and defensive coordinator Rod Marinelli plan to take advantage of what Smith says are "a couple of outstanding [pass-rushing] moves and a great countermove off them." The more attention an opposing offensive line pays to Peppers, the more it opens up chances for other pass rushers. "Everybody you talked to about Julius said the same thing," says Smith. "A guy like Ron Meeks, his defensive coordinator [with Carolina last season], said, 'This is one of the best guys you will ever be around.' And Julius did his homework on us too. I talked to him about the teachers we had on our staff. Stern teachers. We're not going 'm-f' and cursing guys out on the football field, but each day we're going to coach them hard and try to teach them exactly what we want them to do."

Marinelli, a former defensive line coach to Warren Sapp and Simeon Rice, says of Peppers, "It's his work habits, attention to detail, his presence at meetings, how he takes notes. He's a pro, and he's setting a standard on how to be a pro, and he doesn't even have to say anything."

And so Peppers doesn't. The giant man maintains a low profile as usual. But one thing about him has changed. Never a stat hound in his career, Peppers has made it known that he has his eye on Michael Strahan's single-season sack record of 22½. "Realistically, who knows if I ever get there, but if you don't shoot for it, you never will," he says.

He'll have to run like the wind to do it.

- *CLOCKWORK FOOTBALL*

PEPPERS BENEFITED FROM HIS THREE-SPORT BACKGROUND, BUT, SAYS HIS HIGH SCHOOL COACH, "I THINK HIS BURST IS FROM GOD."

Recruiting History: Julius Peppers, The Freak

Julius Peppers was a once-in-a-generation talent at Southern Nash High School — and North Carolina.

https://247sports.com/college/north-carolina/article/julius-peppers-unc-recruiting-history-north-carolina-tar-heels-football-basketball-149482487/



SHERRELL MCMILLAN Jul 24th, 2020, 9:32 AM50



The stories appear to be more myth than truth.

Hear them and it's hard to tell if years distorted memories or minor exploits created unbelievable legends.

"I saw him block a punt and return it for a touchdown while outrunning a cornerback… at 240 pounds."

“We decided to put him at running back because he was as quick as other players on the team. It was just that he did it at 6-5, 230 pounds."

“I remember him hitting a quarterback as he threw, tipping the ball in the air and diving for an interception in a flash."

“In our final game of the season, he intercepted a pass and ran it back all the way for a touchdown. You’re not supposed to do that at his size.”

“I really believe this, but he could’ve played any position on the football field and been an All-American. He was that talented.”

“He’s probably the best player to ever come through North Carolina.”

Sound unbelievable? Sound made up?

They aren’t.

All those things were said by people who coached, covered or followed Julius Peppers.

***

Basketball, not football, was Julius Peppers’s first love. As a kid, it’s what he most enjoyed. He dreamed of hitting game-winning shots and playing in college, before making it to the NBA.

His first year at Southern Nash High School, Peppers didn’t even go out for football. He was intent to play basketball as his primary sport and, hopefully, earn a scholarship offer to his favorite school—North Carolina.

Ray Davis, the football coach at Southern Nash, couldn’t let that stand.

“The first time I ever noticed him was when he was in middle school,” Davis says. “He was really a big kid for a seventh grader. He was gangly and a little awkward I remember. I’d say he was like 6-foot-1 then.”

What surprised Davis the most about watching Peppers was the position he was playing.

“It was strange because he was the tallest guy on the team and he’s out there playing running back,” explains Davis. “He was just super dominant because he was so much bigger than everybody else. He had his eye on basketball, but this was a kid who we knew could be great.”

Davis set up a meeting with Peppers one winter afternoon after basketball practice to discuss his sophomore season and the football team.

“I tried to tell him that he was going to be a dime a dozen size-wise on the basketball court,” says Davis. “But on the football field, his size, his speed and his athleticism could be special.”

In the end Peppers, who loved competing and loved sports, said he’d play football. His one major concern, though, was possibly being forced to play on the offensive line.

“I said, ‘Son if you play football for me I’ll make you a running back,’” Davis recalls. “Maybe that sold him, I don’t know. But he showed up that summer ready for conditioning.”

During the 1995 season, Peppers’s sophomore year, he rushed for 1,000-plus yards and intimidated opponents, media members, fans and even players on his own team.

Running backs weren’t supposed to be 6-foot-5.

They weren't supposed to weigh 230 pounds and have basically no body fat. And if they did do all those things, they were supposed to be slow and plodding, not fast and effortless.

Davis even caught flak for not taking better advantage of Peppers's size.

"As a coach, I always favored big running backs and we always had them at Southern Nash," he says. "I didn't think I was playing him out of position."

If there's one thing 6-foot-5 running backs get, it's attention.

Just a few weeks before playing his first high school football game, Peppers received his first attention from colleges.

"Donnie Thompson, who was an assistant coach at North Carolina, was the first person I talked to about Julius," Davis says. "He had seen him at track meets the prior spring just like I did and couldn't believe his combination of strength, athleticism, speed and everything else."

Thompson was a Carolina assistant coach under Mack Brown and Carl Torbush. He coached some of UNC's best defensive players, NFL first-round picks like Greg Ellis, Ebenezer Ekuban and Marcus Jones.

Thompson recruited southeast Florida and eastern North Carolina for the Tar Heels. When he saw Peppers—in person and on film—his talent jumped out of the VCR.

"Even then, he was a man amongst boys," Thompson says. "Every chance we got we started monitoring him and dropping him letters about Carolina. He was already a Carolina fan, but he was more in his early years because he was an AAU basketball phenom."

Peppers's love of basketball played right into UNC's recruiting pitch. Thompson regularly talked about his friendship with Rocky Mount, N.C. native and Tar Heel assistant coach Phil Ford.

"The first time I saw him play football, he was playing against a school out of Wilson and we were recruiting Octavus Barnes and he was the best player on the field," says Thompson. "He's running and jumping and we're like, 'Wow, this young kid is good.'"

Carolina sent coaches to Southern Nash whenever they could go, sent letters as often as possible under NCAA rules, and invited him to football camp during the summer.

"By the time he became a national recruit, everyone knew they had to beat Carolina," says Thompson. "We were really locked into his mind. We felt good during his junior year and at that point our focus was to keep it a local battle and keep him from making those national visits."

***

Davis admits he was a little overwhelmed by the spring of Peppers's junior season. The phone calls never stopped. The interview requests kept coming in. Coaches constantly dropped by.

"I'd get through teaching classes and there'd be a couple or three coaches sitting outside my office waiting to talk to me. From the west coast, to Florida, to Michigan, to everywhere. Stanford, even Big 10 schools."

Peppers's recruitment became national, just as Thompson had feared. He had offers from Florida State, Florida, Miami, Nebraska, Penn State, USC and a host of other national powers.

“Basically anyone you can think of was after him,” Torbush says. “I don’t feel like he would’ve gone more than four or five hours from home, so he basically was going to stay in the southeast. He was that type of kid.”

Thompson, Torbush and Mack Brown worked on Peppers throughout the summer and just after leaving UNC’s summer camp, he gave the Tar Heels a verbal commitment. Though he liked the coaching staff, especially Thompson, it was another UNC assistant that sealed the deal.

“That camp was the first time we met Coach Brown in person,” says Davis. “But what locked him in on Carolina was when Phil (Ford) came by the office and told him that if he wanted to play basketball then he was welcome to do both. Coach Brown nodded his head in agreement and (Julius) said ‘I’m coming.’”

Adds Thompson: “I have to give credit to Dean Smith and Phil Ford. They really extended themselves in the recruiting process by committing to him at least being on the junior varsity team when he got to Carolina.”

His commitment was a seminal moment for UNC’s recruiting efforts. Before most other schools had a chance, the Tar Heel staff had discovered, evaluated, offered, pursued and eventually gotten a commitment from the state’s best.

Thompson says it was the model for how Brown approached recruiting.

“We shut down the borders, that’s what Mack wanted to do,” he says. “We believed in our heart that you can go with the Tidewater (Virginia) and North Carolina and you could beat anybody in the country anytime, but you’ve got to get them all. … We went to every coach in the state. If you can control those regions, that’s the formula for UNC to be successful.”

He continues: “That was the strategy. We’d recruit the top 25 players in the state, but we had to have 12 or more of them. Getting Julius gave us No. 1 and we worked our way down from there.”

Peppers’s senior season wrapped up one of the most accomplished high school careers in state history. He finished his career with 3,501 rushing yards and 46 touchdowns. He was a Parade All-American, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Male Athlete of the Year, and earned all-state honors as a junior and senior.

“When we got his high school film, on the defensive end he kind of relaxed a little bit because people were scared to run his way,” says Thompson. “Every now and then they’d test him and then he’d run some guy down from 50 yards out. Most of the time, though, he got no defensive action. We were intrigued by his offensive skills and how we [maybe] could mold him a little.”

Peppers also helped Southern Nash win the state championship in track, as part of the 4 x 200 relay team and as a triple jumper.

“I just can’t tell you how amazing he was athletically,” says Davis. “A kid that size, with feet that big, he could do standing back somersaults all the way down the football field in full gear. He could throw the football 60 yards. He just had God-given things the rest of us didn’t.”

***

Two months after Peppers committed to UNC, John Mackovic was preparing his Texas team to host No. 11 UCLA more than 1,300 miles away.

Mackovic had won a share of the Southwest conference title in 1994, won it outright in 1995 and captured the inaugural Big 12 championship in 1996.

The UCLA game was the beginning of the end, however. The Bruins handed the Longhorns a 66-3 loss, the worst home defeat in school history. Mackovic and his team limped through the season finishing 4-7.

After a season-ending loss to rival Texas A&M on Nov. 26, 1997, Mackovic was fired. Eight days later, Dec. 4, 1997, Brown was introduced at a press conference as the Longhorns' new coach.

Torbush was named UNC's interim head coach.

Twenty-four hours after Brown's press conference, Peppers informed Thompson he was thinking of decommitting from UNC.

All of Thompson and Torbush's work from the previous three years was in jeopardy.

"We had to hold onto him after Mack left," Thompson recalls. "When that happened his phone started ringing, but he was really only listening to Florida State, Clemson and us."

Florida State was—arguably—the country's top program at that point. The Seminoles were coming off an 11-1 season that ended with a Sugar Bowl blowout win over Ohio State.

Peppers thought about visiting, but again UNC's basketball and football coaches—Torbush, Ford and Thompson—assured him he could play both sports at UNC.

"That was meaningful for his appetite," says Thompson. "They (Florida State) came up to Southern Nash and he was about to visit them, but our combination of football and basketball at the time, no one could touch it."

Still, the thought of not playing for Torbush and Thompson, who had recruited and coordinated some of the best defenses in UNC history, bothered Peppers.

After UNC's dismantling of Virginia Tech in that year's Gator Bowl, Torbush permanently kept the head coaching job.

And the Tar Heels kept Peppers. He signed a letter of intent in February of 1998.

"The biggest thing that kept him was Carolina hiring Torbush and him keeping quality people on staff," says Thompson. "I was able to continue his recruitment with no breakup. Coach Torbush was able to step right in and Julius came on in."

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(Photo: Craig Jones / Staff, Getty)

The other part of Brown and Torbush's philosophy was to recruit athletes and figure out what position to put them at after they arrived on campus.

Ideally, Thompson says, the Tar Heels would recruit multiple players to fit a certain profile and—through weightlifting, nutrition and practice—convert them to specific positions as needed.

“We started him as a fullback and tight end,” Torbush said. “Honestly, I’m not sure if any of us knew where he’d line up long term, but we thought that was a good place to start.”

Thompson had no doubt about where Peppers needed to be.

“I recruited Ebenezer (Ekuban) and he was a tight end and then (Alge) Crumpler,“ says Thompson. “Julius came in and he beat out Ebenezer and so they moved Ebenezer to defensive end. We had just lost Greg Ellis to the (Dallas) Cowboys. So we decided to redshirt Julius, let him get his weight up a little bit and have him play for me at defensive end, because Alge was very good.”

The results were immediate and startling. During UNC’s pro day in the spring of 1999, Ekuban gave a confession to scouts in attendance.

“They kept asking him how good he could be and he jokingly said ‘I’m not even the best defensive end on our football team,’” Thompson remembers. “There’s a guy named Julius Peppers who’s going to be twice as good as I am.”

Ekuban obviously knew what he was talking about.

In Peppers’s first season, he led the Tar Heels in sacks and tackles for loss and was named a Freshman All-American.

The itch to play ACC basketball, however, remained. Not just junior varsity basketball, but for the Tar Heels who were fresh off a Final Four appearance.

Peppers came to Thompson before his redshirt sophomore season and asked his position coach for a favor.

“He said, ‘Coach, if you let me go play basketball in summer league, I will come back and I’ll outrun everybody on the team in our conditioning test,’” Thompson says.

The test was a series of “suicides,” where each team member lined up on the goal line then ran to the 10-yard-line and back. Then to the 20. Then to the 30. Then to the 40. And so on and so forth until they reached the other goal line.

“He said ‘I guarantee you I’ll have the best time on the team if you let me play basketball this summer,’” Thompson says. “So, we let him out of summer conditioning to play basketball.”

On the first day of fall camp, Torbush told the team it was time for the conditioning test.

“He outran everyone,” Thompson says with a laugh. “The defensive backs, the running backs, the quarterbacks, everyone. That’s just the kind of athlete he was.”

He played so well in the summer league that Ford asked Thompson and Torbush if he could join the basketball team in December.

They obliged and he played an integral role, helping the 1999-2000 basketball team make its third Final Four in four years.

Peppers played two more football seasons at UNC, becoming arguably the most decorated player in school history.

Torbush only coached him for three of his four years in Chapel Hill, however. He was fired following the 2000 season and replaced by John Bunting.

“One of the best plays he ever had, it ended up being my last game at Carolina,” Torbush says. “We were playing Duke and he dropped into coverage. The quarterback thought he could get it by him, but Julius got the interception and took it back for a touchdown. Those kinds of things just make you shake your head. He was unreal.”

He was named a first-team All-American by The Sporting News, the Associated Press, the AFCA and took home the Chuck Bednarik Award in 2001, given annually to the nation’s best overall defensive player.

He finished his Carolina career second on the school’s all-time list for tackles for loss (53) and sacks (30.5) in just three full seasons.

Peppers opted to forego his senior year and enter the NFL Draft. He was the No. 2 overall pick—the highest ever for a UNC player—of the Carolina Panthers in 2002.

His NFL career ultimately spanned 17 seasons. He was named to nine Pro Bowls, ranks fourth all-time in sacks, and is the only player in NFL history with at least 150 sacks and 10 interceptions.

“When he went hard, if he decided he wasn’t, he wasn’t going to get blocked by anyone,” says Thompson. “I’ve seen him dominate an entire offensive line by himself. He was the best I’ve ever coached—by far.”

Tony Romo

Nomination Form

HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

Name of Nominee: Antonio (Tony) Ramiro Romo
(first, middle, last)

Individual Submitting Nomination:

Name: Stephanie Hauser

Phone: 715-883-1168

Street Address: 5516 Vern Holmes Drive

City, State, Zip Code: Stevens Point, WI 54482

Signed: _____

Date: 11/10/2022

Email: shauser@wiaawi.org

NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:

☒ Athlete ☐ Coach ☐ Official ☐ Administrator ☐ Performing Arts ☐ Others

Name of Nominee: Antonio Ramiro Romo
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: 18 Ash Bluff Lane
(street address)

Dallas, TX 75248
(city, state, zip)

Email: rjromo@arrpromo.com

Phone: 262-391-5691 Date of Birth: April, 21 1980

School Affiliation (if any) Burlington High School

City: Burlington State: WI

Place of Birth: San Diego, CA Date of Retirement: April 4, 2017

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain:
National Football League - Analyst for CBS

If deceased, date of death:
[Tab here]

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: Candice Romo (spouse)

Address: 18 Ash Bluff Lane Dallas, TX 75248

Phone: 972-345-3141

Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Burlington High School	Burlington, WI	1998	N/A
College/University: Eastern Illinois Universtiy	Charleston, IL	2003	[Tab here]
Post Graduate School: [Tab here]	[Tab here]	[Tab here]	[Tab here]

☒ Small Portrait-type Photograph of Nominee Attached (to be used for news release, etc.)
☒ Letters of Recommendation Attached
☒ Newspaper and/or Other Supportive Material Attached

ATHLETE

Athletic Participation in Senior High School [give complete details concerning specific performances, years, records, etc. Please note the classification of the high school (A, AA, etc.) and how many classes the state had in that sport.]

Tony Romo, class of 1998, participated in football, basketball, and golf during his career at Burlington High School. Tony is the first Burlington High School athlete to receive All-State recognition in 3-spots.

Tony was a standout football player for the Demons. As a two-year starting quarterback he passed for 3,732 yards and 42 touchdowns.

Football in the State of Wisconsin at that time had 6 divisions, in which Burlington competed in Division 2 (2nd largest division).

Many considered basketball Tony's best sport and as a 3-year letter winner he averaged 24.3 points, 8.8 rebounds, 3.1 steals, and 4.7 assists per game.

Basketball in the State of Wisconsin at that time had 4 divisions, in which Burlington competed in Division 2 (2nd largest division).

Golf is a sport that Tony continues to play competitively, and he developed some of his skills as a 4-year letter winner for the Demon golf team.

Golf in the State of Wisconsin at that time had 3 divisions, in which Burlington competed in Division 1 (largest division).

Honors (give complete details of high school and post-high school athletic honors and achievements, awards, and recognition received as a result of high school achievements)

High School
Demon Award - 1998, which is given to the most outstanding student-athlete in the class.
Football
1st team All-Southeast Conference honors - 1996, 1997
1st team All-Area, All-County, and All-Region - 1996, 1997
AP All-State Teams from the Associated - 1997
All-State Wisconsin Football Coaches Association - 1997
Racine County Player of the Year - 1997
Burlington High School Wall of Fame - 2008
Burlington High School - Field Dedication "Tony Romo Field" - 2022

Basketball
Southeast Conference Champions - 1997
Conference Player of the Year - 1998
All-Racine County - 1997, 1998
Racine County Player of the Year - 1998
Associated Press All-State - 1998

Golf
Most Valuable Player - 1997, 1998
All-Racine County - 1997, 1998
Southeast Conference Champion - 1998 (74)
WIAA Regional Champion - 1998 (72)

College
Walter Payton Award - 2002 (Top Division 1-AA Player)
All-American - 2000, 2001, 2002
All-Ohio Valley Conference - 2000, 2001, 2002
Ohio Vallery Conference Player of the Year - 2000, 2001, 2002
Eastern Illinois record - 85 career TD passes
Eastern Illinois record - 34 TD passes in a season - 2002
Eastern Illinois University - 1st player to have number retired
Eastern Illinois University - Hall of Fame 2009
Inducted in the NCAA College Football Hall of Fame - 2021

Professional
NFL Pro Bowl selection - 2006, 2007, 2009, 2014
NFL All-Pro - 2nd Team - 2014
NFC Passing Yards Leader - 2009
NFL Passer Rating Leader - 2014
NFL Completion % Leader - 2014
NFC TD Leader - 2007
Ed Block Courage Award - 2011
NFL Record - 41 consecutive road games with at least 1 TD pass
Dallas Cowboys record - 34,183 career passing yards
Dallas Cowboys record - 248 career touchdown passes
Dallas Cowboys record - 40 games with 3 TD passes
Dallas Cowboys record - 46 games with 300 yards passing
Dallas Cowboys record - 38 consecutive games with TD pass

Other information *(not previously listed)*

Broadcasting
Nominated for Sports Emmy - Outstanding Sports Personality/Analyst - 2018, 2019
Announcer - Super Bowl LIII, Super Bowl LV

Letters of Recommendation

WISCONSIN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

5516 Vern Holmes Drive • Stevens Point, WI • 54482-8833
Phone 715-344-8580 • FAX 715-344-4241 • email info@wiaawi.org • Web site www.wiaawi.org

November 14, 2022

NFHS Hall of Fame Committee

Dear Committee Members,

The WIAA proudly nominates Mr. Tony Romo for induction into the NFHS Hall of Fame.

A 1998 graduate of Burlington High School in Burlington, WI, Mr. Romo exemplifies success both in athletics and life. Starting out as a soccer player, Tony excelled in football, basketball and golf in high school eventually playing NCAA Division I football at Eastern Illinois (where he is a member of their Hall of Fame). Mr. Romo had a very successful career in the NFL and now as a sports broadcaster, both of which are evident in our supporting documentation attached to this nomination. Tony positively represents his Burlington community and the entire state of Wisconsin and is very deserving of this honor.

We recognize that there are many fine and deserving nominees for this Nation Federation recognition, but we firmly believe that Tony Romo must be recognized among the very best of the best for his contributions to high school sports and beyond.

Please accept this nomination of Tony Romo for inclusion in the class of 2023 National Federation of High Schools Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Hauser
Executive Director
Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association

October 31, 2022

Dear Hall of Fame Director/Selection Committee:

The reason for my reaching out to you today is to ask for your consideration of Tony Romo as a candidate for induction into the National High School Hall of Fame.

My name is Steve Gerber and for 35 years I was a teacher and coach in the Burlington Area School District. With pride, I was Tony's head football coach during his junior and senior years (1997-1998).

In a short period of time it became abundantly clear that Tony was an incredibly gifted athlete. Graduating in 1998, he was recognized by the state of Wisconsin as an all-state athlete in football, basketball and golf. But he was much more than just a gifted athlete. He was also a young man that possessed the unique and frequently uncommon ability to lead and/or follow, depending on the situation and circumstance.

To elaborate, as I spent more time working with and around Tony, it became very apparent that there was a close, mutual respect that existed within his family. His upbringing clearly laid a foundation for balancing activity time with family time as he was involved in multiple sports throughout high school. As he progressed through high school, family support was something that was always present and he was extremely loyal to this responsibility.

When interacting with his teammates and peers, Tony could identify with just about everyone. Having so much success in athletics could have made it difficult for him to relate to others, yet he seemed to learn at a young age the importance of kindness, patience and frequently, trust. He absolutely led by his performance on the field, but also by his actions off the field.

Tony loved to compete. All the time. He seemed to gain amazing confidence and experience from placing himself in competitive situations. Over time, one could see and feel his leadership presence on the field, the court or even golf course and how it frequently served to elevate other teammates performances.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to hear Tony speak to the crowd at half time of a recent Burlington High School football game. He spoke on a number of topics but at the very end of his talk, he chose to share some advice. Tony encouraged the people in attendance to never hesitate to tell a person that they are special, that they matter and that you believe in them. He went on to explain that he heard similar words of encouragement, from a highly respected coach, over 25 years ago, when unsure about how interested he was in playing the sport of football. Of course Tony did opt for football and this "highly respected coach" mentioned was also my coaching predecessor and for certain, a wise mentor for me as well.

In conclusion, to the selection committee, thank you for your time and consideration of Tony Romo as a candidate for induction into the National High School Hall of Fame. I believe Tony is

more than worthy and a prime example of an athlete who represented and continues to represent, all the great ideals of high school sports.

Sincerely,

Steve J. Gerber
Burlington High School
(teacher/coach 1979-2014)

(Home)
517 Walnut Street
Burlington WI 53105
(262)-210-0452

BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
A Community of Learners

400 McCANNA PARKWAY
BURLINGTON, WISCONSIN 53105
(262) 763-0200
FAX (262) 763-0216

11/08/22
To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to give the highest recommendation to Tony Romo for consideration into The National Federation of High School Association Athletic Hall of Fame. I had the extreme privilege of being Tony's high school basketball coach while he attended Burlington (WI) High School. One can determine from reading the biography on the NFHS nomination form about Tony's athletic talents and realize what an accomplished athlete he was at every level. However, what I found inspiring was what made his tremendous athletic success possible. During the duration I have known him, Tony has amazed me time and time again with his leadership, passion, purpose, hard work, and kindness as he conquered challenges and obstacles that happened to have gotten in his way. From his high school days to his professional football career, and now in his broadcasting role, Tony has seized every opportunity to hone his innate talents and attributes and his imprint will be forever left on our school and community.

A notable quality Tony exhibited was his natural and very keen leadership ability. This intrinsic capacity to lead spans multiple venues yet always made an impressionable impact on those around him. Tony was a very driven and direct leader but he did so prudently and with purpose. This ability allowed him to channel his desire for success for himself and others with an approachable demeanor thus creating an environment that created lasting connections with those associated with him. Though he was soft-spoken he was still able to use his quiet yet fierce confidence to exude acceptance while still making connections. Tony did this with a positive force by encouraging, supporting, and demanding teammates to give their very best. Elevating others and inspiring those around him, Tony continued to vigorously lead with passion that was never blinding.

Tony also possessed a relentless pursuit of perfection that moved above and beyond what most others do for success in athletics. Tony was different as his thirst for the chance to learn and grow was simply much larger than the average athlete. This ambition brought a constant curiosity to explore, research, and practice various ways to reach the top. From throwing a football, to shooting a basketball, to hitting a golf shot, Tony always searched to find every advantage possible. Combined with countless hours of purposeful practice to master his desired craft he never stopped working until he reached his desired level of success. As an ambitious and talented student of any game he played he was always looking for an edge. He defines what it takes to be a winner as he continued to seek ways to overcome challenges while never wavering from the high standards set by Tony, himself. Tony desired to be directly involved in learning by incessantly questioning and actively participating in the process. However, what always separated him from others was using his perfectionistic tendencies to inspire others around him to follow in his lead.

Being a student-athlete also served Tony well when one looks at what challenges awaited ahead during his post-high school years. During his more difficult moments his perseverance always rose to the forefront, and was recognized by his teammates, coaches, and needless to say, his fans. Tony approached professional challenges with a positive mindset while staying true to his commitments and his desire to do what he believed was in his best interest. His unyielding quest to reach his goals and dreams did not go without making service to others a priority, and that quality continues to exist today. Tony exemplified leadership, sportsmanship, and citizenship that also exceeded his competitive spirit while always remaining kind and humble. Tony is an ideal candidate for induction into the NFHS Athletic Hall of Fame because he chose to always show value in responsibility and character throughout all levels of his career. His drive for excellence is a representation of what we want today's student-athletes to all strive to embody. If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to call (262) 763-0190.

Sincerely,

Steve Berezowitz
School Counselor/Head Basketball Coach
Burlington High School (WI)

Hans Block
316 Hickory Dr.
Burlington, WI. 53105
262-492-0035

October 26, 2022

To Whom it may Concern,

It is a privilege to write a letter of recommendation for Tony Romo supporting his nomination and consideration for induction into The National Federation of High School Association Athletic Hall of Fame. Tony was an outstanding three-sport athlete at Burlington High School. He participated in football, basketball, and golf. Tony is a gifted athlete, and he went on to obtain all-state honors in all three sports while in high school.

I was a member of the Burlington High School Football staff when Tony played for us. It was a blessing to work with him and to be around him for those seasons. He was incredibly competitive and the ultimate team player. He always encouraged his teammates while also being a tireless worker at practice and during the off-season. Tony had the ability to understand abstract concepts and recognize things that other players did not see. His ability to quickly identify a situation, adjust, or make quick decisions fostered his competitive spirit. Tony has always exhibited incredible leadership. He had a knack for saying the right thing, to the right people, at the right time. He had the ability to make the other people around him better and challenged his teammates to step up, play smart, and work together. Tony went on to have an elite career playing college football at Eastern Illinois University. He was recognized for his great play and was awarded the Walter Payton Award given annually to the most valuable player in Division 1AA Football. He went on to an illustrious career in the NFL with the Dallas Cowboys, where he played for 14 years and was the starting quarterback for 10 seasons. Tony currently holds the position of lead football analyst covering NFL Football for CBS Television.

I was fortunate to be the head football coach at Burlington High School for twelve years. During those years, Tony would return to Burlington, Wisconsin, and conduct a youth fundamental football camp for 15 consecutive summers. During those days at camp, it was easy to see the wonderful people skills that Tony possesses being put into practice. He worked directly with kids of all ages and abilities. He made it a point to high-five every kid at camp each year. Tony provided free t-shirts for all campers and treated everyone involved like they were family. Tony Romo, with his personal approach, his positive outlook, and his kindness, is a perfect representative of what we as educators and high school coaches look for in our future leaders. He is the ideal example and role model of how we want the young people we work with to become successful and to go on to bigger and better things while still retaining the class, high level of character, and wholesome values. Tony still returns to Burlington annually and continues to be very supportive of our high school athletic programs. He's a terrific young man. It is with the highest level of support that I recommend Tony Romo for consideration for induction into the NFHS Hall of Fame. I can think of no one that I have ever worked with to be more deserving of such an honor.

Respectfully,

Hans Block
Former Head Football Coach
Burlington High School - Burlington Wisconsin

Support Data

Romo kicks soccer habit

BY JON COCA
Journal Times

Two years ago, Tony Romo walked into Burlington High School a soccer player. Today, he's the most prolific quarterback in Racine County.

How did that come about? You might suspect Burlington football coach Steve Gerber — who'll watch Romo lead his Demons (9-2) against Cudahy (10-0) in a WIAA Division 2 state quarterfinal game at 1 this afternoon at Cudahy — either was responsible for the school's 1994 soccer schedule or still owes a favor to whomever did.

"We didn't really have a freshman (soccer) team, so we played three games in a row against the same team, and that didn't sound like a lot of fun to me," Romo said. "I wasn't good enough for the junior varsity (soccer) team, so I tried out for football."

Romo, 6-foot-2 and 200 pounds, had never played football before he tried out for the freshman team; he made the team but didn't start. In his sophomore year a broken left middle finger prevented him from having any impact at the junior varsity level.

So two years into his newly-found fall sport he'd seen only minimal playing time. Many players would have given up the sport at that point, knowing that limited experience would hinder their playing time at the varsity level.

In a spring scrimmage with Park, Romo dislocated the middle finger on his right (throwing) hand after earning the starting position. Luckily for this year's Demons, Romo is no quitter.

"I didn't really know a lot about him, but when we started working together in summer practice you could just see that he was head and shoulders above the other kids athletically," Gerber said. "He just had to catch up a little bit with knowledge of our offense, because they didn't do exactly the same thing at the sophomore level."

After sitting out the first game — a 15-0 loss to Hartford — Romo made his first start against Elkhorn. Although Burlington lost 34-14, Romo put a stranglehold on the position, completing 26 of 33 passes for 308 yards with two touchdowns and two interceptions.

"Before the year started, I knew I had a shot at being the quarterback but I didn't really think I was actually going to do this well in the passing offense," Romo said. "It's working out great."

Entering today's game Romo has completed 117 of 173 passes (67.6 percent) for 1,688 yards, 24 touchdowns and just six interceptions. More importantly, he's led the Demons to nine straight victories.

Not bad for a soccer player.

"I think the quarterback always has to be the person who steps up and I think he knew that, when he came in and knew he was starting," senior wide receiver Steve Tenhagen said. "We let him know he was going to have to be a leader."



Romo Demons

Leadership is a role Romo, a point guard on the Demons' basketball team, is used to. But it's still tough to step in as an unproven junior and lead seniors used to winning. Romo had to earn the confidence of his elder teammates.

"They obviously accept him for his leadership and abilities because the kids have seen that he can do it on the field," Gerber said. "A lot of times we'll talk on the sidelines and — I hate to give him credit for it — but he'll see things or recommend things, as a 17-year-old, that I didn't see," Gerber said. "When you have a kid on the field that is a student of the game it just makes things so much easier."

But good quarterbacks are nothing new to Burlington High School football. The past two seasons the Demons had a pair of Ryans, Hoffman and Dussalt, who threw for 19 and 29 touchdowns respectively. Both made the All-Racine County first team.

Even though both were accomplished high school quarterbacks, they made the first team for different reasons. Dussalt had a strong arm and did a lot of three-step drops. He knew the game and, because of his preparation, he knew where a window would be to put the ball.

Hoffman threw on the run and didn't often stay in the pocket. Gerber liked to get him on the corner and send him on a bootleg play.

"He (Romo) is kind of a combination of both of them," Gerber said. "He has a decent arm and yet he can move on the run and can throw effectively that way.

"It gives us some more vesatility. I know we can drop back five steps, and I know he is going to throw the ball where there is a window. It provides a lot of flexibility."

Versatility and flexibility are terms that fit Romo: In the 1995-96 school year he made the All-County first team in golf and received All-County honorable mention in boys' basketball, his first love.

"I've been playing basketball since I was three, so it just comes easiest for me," Romo said. "Football has gotten a lot more fun. I'd have to say it's passed up golf."

Burlington (9-2) plays at Cudahy today at 1 p.m. in a WIAA Division 1 quarterfinal game; Racine Lutheran plays Stevens Point Pacelli in a WISAA Division 3 semifinal today at 1:30 p.m. at Horlick Field.

38°

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(Spectrum News 1/Dan Molloy)

SPORTS

Burlington High School dedicates Tony Romo Field

BY DAN MOLLOY | MILWAUKEE
PUBLISHED 1:30 PM ET OCT. 01, 2022

BURLINGTON, Wis. — Tony Romo returned to his hometown Friday for his first Burlington football game since his 1997 senior season. In a special halftime ceremony, the school dedicated its new synthetic turf surface as Tony Romo Field.

As the Demons ran wild in a 47-14 win over Beloit Memorial, two of Romo's three sons supplied water to players on the Burlington sideline. Their first experience of

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those players. They're like heroes to you.

By the time he graduated in 1998, Romo was a star in football, basketball and golf — the first student-athlete at BHS to earn All-State honors in three sports. He was a three-time All-American at Eastern Illinois, earning the 2002 Walter Payton Award as the top player in Division I-AA (now known as FCS).

The Dallas Cowboys gave him a chance as an undrafted free agent, and Romo went on to become the face of the franchise, retiring in 2017 as the team's all-time leading passer.

In a speech at Friday's field dedication, Romo told the Homecoming crowd his football career was only possible because people in Burlington believed in him.

> *I just want to do a small part to hopefully help out and give back the same way people did for me.*

"[It was] the teachers, the coaches, the community, and how much that affected me growing up," Romo said. "I just want to do a small part to hopefully help out and give back the same way people did for me."

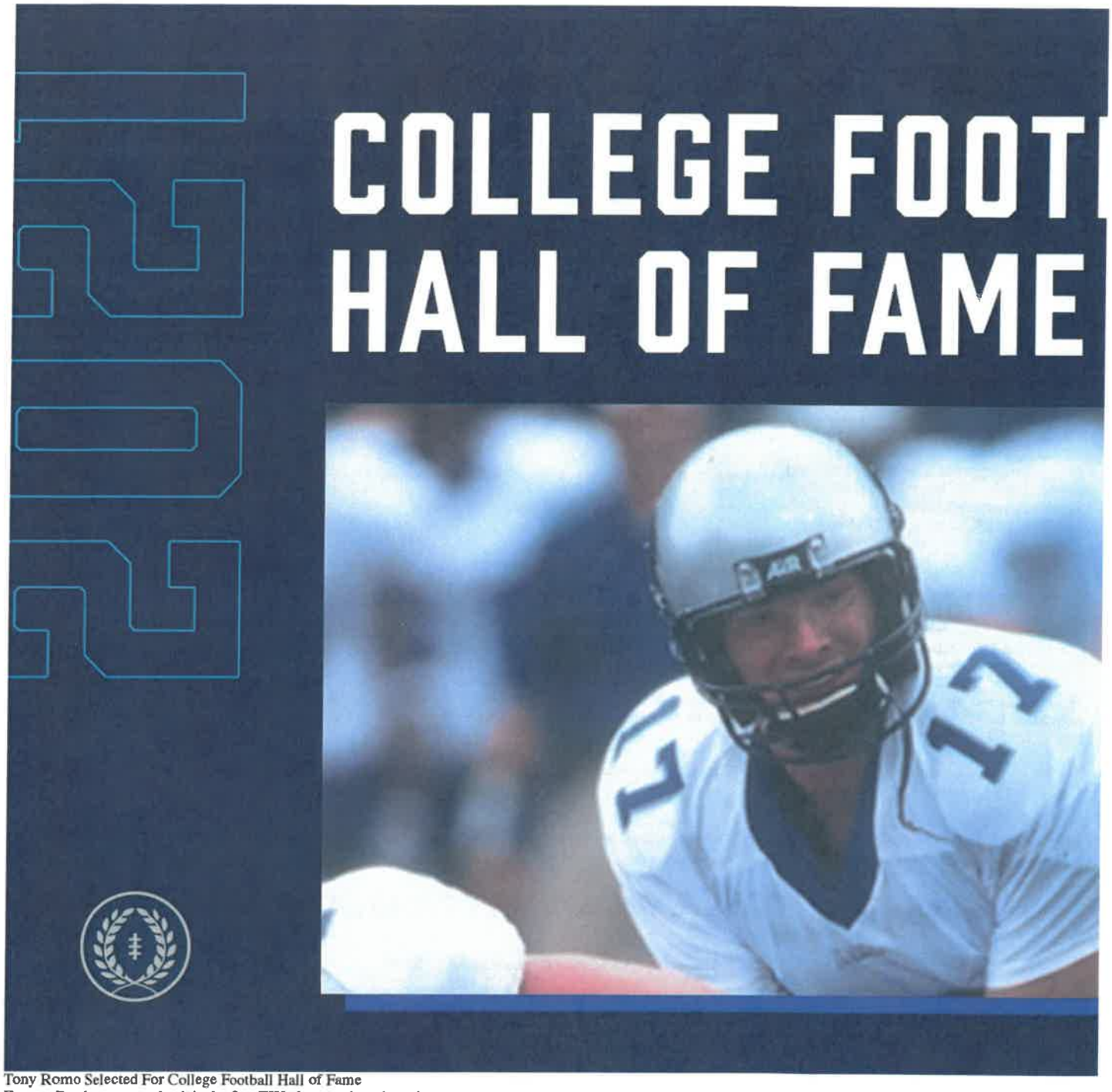
Romo continues to give back to his hometown school. He hosted football camps at his alma mater from 2004 to 2019, and joined local donors to fund the new playing surface at Don Dalton Stadium. With his family, former teammates and coaches beside him at halftime, Romo repeatedly thanked his hometown for its support.

"I don't take it for granted," Romo said. "Burlington is home. It always will be, and I love coming back and seeing you guys, so thank you for that."

Romo's stop in Burlington coincides with a CBS Sports assignment in Green Bay. He and broadcast partner Jim Nantz will be on the call for Sunday's 3:25 p.m. game between the Packers and Patriots.

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Eastern Illinois University Athletics



Tony Romo Selected For College Football Hall of Fame
Former Panthers quarterback is the first EIU player to be selected
Football
Posted: 1/11/2021 11:45:00 AM
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IRVING, Texas (Jan. 11, 2021) – The National Football Foundation (NFF) & College Hall of Fame announced today the 2021 College Football Hall of Fame Class during "SportsCenter" on ESPN.

Included in today's select group of inductees is former Eastern Illinois quarterback Tony Romo. Romo becomes the first Eastern Illinois player selected to the College Football Hall of Fame and joins former EIU head coach Darrell Mudra as inductees from EIU.

The winner of the 2002 Walter Payton Award as the top player in the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS), Tony Romo goes down as one of the greatest players in Eastern Illinois history. He deservedly becomes the first Panther player to enter the College Football Hall of Fame.

A First Team All-American in 2002, Romo became the first three-time Ohio Valley Conference Offensive Player of the Year in league history. The Walter Payton Award winner led the Panthers to consecutive conference titles (2001, 2002) and three-straight FCS Playoff berths. EIU was 25-10 overall and 17-2 in OVC games with Romo as the starter, and the team was nationally ranked during his final three seasons.

A three-time First Team All-OVC selection, Romo set conference and school records for single-season (34 in 2002) and career (85) touchdown passes, which remained unbroken for more than a decade. The 2001 Third Team All-American owns the school record with a 157.5 career passing efficiency, and he ranks third in career passing yards with 8,212. In 2009, Romo was inducted into the EIU Athletic Hall of Fame; the same day, he became the first player to have his number retired by the Panthers.

After going undrafted in 2003, Romo would put together a standout NFL career with the Dallas Cowboys from 2003-16. The four-time Pro Bowl selection holds Cowboy records for career passing yards and passing touchdowns.

Off the field, Romo has annually hosted youth football camps in his hometown of Burlington, Wisconsin. He is also heavily involved with the United Way, Make-A-Wish Foundation and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Since retiring with the Cowboys, Romo has served as the lead color analyst for CBS' NFL telecasts, working alongside Jim Nantz.

Romo becomes the third player that played in the Ohio Valley Conference to be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame joining Jim Youngblood from Tennessee Tech and George Floyd Jr., from Eastern Kentucky. Three former head coaches from the OVC have also been inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame with Roy Kidd (Eastern Kentucky), James "Boots" Donnelly (Middle Tennessee/Austin Peay) and Frank Beamer (Murray State).

The remainder of the 2021 College Football Hall of Fame Class is listed below with additional information on the ceremony. Information on each 2021 HOF Inductee is available at https://www.cfbhall.com/

2021 COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME CLASS

PLAYERS:
* Harris Barton – OT, North Carolina (1983-86)
* David Fulcher – DB, Arizona State (1983-85)
* Dan Morgan – LB, Miami [FL] (1997-2000)
* Carson Palmer – QB, Southern California (1998-2002)
* Tony Romo – QB, Eastern Illinois (1999-2002)
* Kenneth Sims – DT, Texas (1978-81)
* C.J. Spiller – RB/KR, Clemson (2006-09)
* Darren Sproles – RB, Kansas State (2001-04)
* Aaron Taylor – OT, Notre Dame (1990-93)
* Andre Tippett – DE, Iowa (1979-81)
* Al Wilson – LB, Tennessee (1995-98)

COACHES:
* Rudy Hubbard – 83-48-3 (63.1%); Florida A&M (1974-85)
* Bob Stoops – 190-48-0 (79.8%); Oklahoma (1999-2016)

The 11 First Team All-America players and two standout coaches in the 2021 Class were selected from the national ballot of 78 players and seven coaches from the Football Bowl Subdivision and the 99 players and 33 coaches from the divisional ranks.

"We are extremely proud to announce the 2021 College Football Hall of Fame Class," said Archie Manning, NFF Chairman and a 1989 College Football Hall of Famer from Mississippi. "Each of these men has established himself among the absolute best to have ever played or coached the game, and we look forward to immortalizing their incredible accomplishments."

The 2021 College Football Hall of Fame Class will officially be inducted during the 63rd NFF Annual Awards Dinner on Dec. 7 alongside the 2020 Hall of Fame Class (the 2020 event was canceled due to COVID-19).

The inductees will also be recognized at their respective collegiate institutions with NFF Hall of Fame On-Campus Salutes, presented by Fidelity Investments, during the fall. Their accomplishments will be forever immortalized at the Chick-fil-A College Football Hall of Fame in Atlanta, and each inductee will receive a custom ring created by Jostens, the official and exclusive supplier of NFF rings and awards.

"With two College Football Hall of Fame classes, the NFF Annual Awards Dinner will prove to be one of the biggest events in the NFF's history when it returns this December," said NFF President & CEO Steve Hatchell. "We are beyond excited to announce the 2021 electees and look forward to making induction worth the wait for the 2020 class."

The announcement of the 2021 Class was made today during the Noon ET edition of "SportsCenter" on ESPN.

"We want to thank ESPN for the opportunity to announce the 2021 College Football Hall of Fame Class during 'SportsCenter,'" said Hatchell. "Today's announcement shines a light on the accomplishments of some of college football's greatest legends."
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Tony Romo lands second Emmy nomination for broadcast talents

By PATRIK WALKER - Apr 4, 2019

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Tony Romo has taken over.

The former franchise quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys has rapidly seen himself go from America's favorite sports figure to hate to the broadcaster they absolutely can not live without. The 2016 season was an emotionally tumultuous one for the four-time pro bowler, who went down on Aug. 25 with another back injury in what could've been the most dynamic season of his career. That would open the door for fourth-round pick Dak Prescott, who took the reins and never looked back. Romo, being the class act and consummate leader he is, conceded the starting role officially that November and went out with a bang against the Philadelphia Eagles — effortlessly marching the Cowboys down the field on a six-play, 81-yard drive punctuated by a touchdown dime to wide receiver Terrance Williams.

He'd then leave the field, and his playing days in the NFL, for good.

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His release in Spring 2017 was amicable, and even included the Cowboys relinquishing his football rights — something they weren't required to do. He'd immediately take up the post as No. 1 color commentator for CBS Sports, and Romo hasn't just been colorful. He's been an 800-count pack of Crayola. In other words, he's pretty good at what he does. As evidence to that compliment, the four-time pro bowl QB has been named Sports Illustrated's "Media Person of the Year" in 2017 and his tandem with Jim Nantz was dubbed No. 1 broadcasting duo in the NFL that same year.

He was also nominated in 2017 for an Emmy, and he's now achieved that feat in both of his first two seasons in the booth — with CBS Sports announcing Romo has landed the nomination yet again for 2018.

He's up against veterans Kirk Herbstreit and John Smoltz for the honor, with the former having beaten Romo out one year ago.

That's stiff competition, but given just how much Romo has already changed the genre, he'll no doubt hold his own in the discussion for who deserves to land the coveted award. His brand of enthused (nearly giddy) coverage that includes using his alien football IQ to predict plays is infectious, and has many tuning more to find out what he'll say next as opposed to watching the game he's covering. After all, this is the same guy who kept the world entertained by analyzing a cat running onto Lambeau Field during a lightning delay in 2017.

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Win or lose, thanks to him, sportscasting will never be the same. Between that and receiving sponsor exemptions to participate in PGA Tour events, it's safe to assume the once most vilified sports figure on Earth is now the polar opposite and enjoying every minute of it.

Move over Raymond Barone. It's taken only two short years, but now everybody loves Romo.

Start the Conversation

Amari Cooper trade: Cowboys send WR to Browns for NFL Draft picks

By BRAD CRAWFORD - Sat Mar 12 2022

Share 3 Comments

The Dallas Cowboys traded wide receiver **Amari Cooper** and a sixth-round pick to the Cleveland Browns for a firth-round selection and sixth-round pick in the upcoming 2022 NFL Draft, **ESPN's Adam Schefter reports**.

Cooper was due $20 million in fully-guaranteed money on the fifth day of the new league year, March 20. Moving Cooper to another teams saves Dallas $16 million against the 2022 cap. Cooper is midway through a five-year, $100 million contract that runs through the 2024 season. He has been with the Cowboys since they traded for him in the middle of the 2018 season. Last year, in 15 games, Cooper caught 68 passes

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Tony Romo



Antonio Ramiro Romo
Position: QB **Throws:** Right
6-2, 230lb (188cm, 104kg)
Born: April 21, 1980 in San Diego, CA (Age: 42-207d)
College: Eastern Illinois
Weighted Career AV (100-95-...): 95 (196th overall since 1960)
High School: Burlington (WI)
Instagram: tony.romo

4x Pro Bowl

Passing

Year	Age	Tm	Pos	No.	G	GS	QBrec	Cmp	Att	Cmp%	Yds	TD	TD%	Int	Int%	1D	Lng	Y/A	AY/A	Y/C	Y/G	Rate	QBR	Sk	Yds	Sk%	N
2004	24	DAL	QB	9	6	0		0	0		0	0		0			0				0.0			0	0		
2005	25	DAL	QB	9	16	0		0	0		0	0		0			0				0.0			0	0		
2006*	26	DAL	QB	9	16	10	6-4-0	220	337	65.3	2903	19	5.6	13	3.9	144	56	**8.6**	8.0	13.2	181.4	95.1	63.5	21	124	5.9	7
2007*	27	DAL	QB	9	16	16	13-3-0	335	520	64.4	4211	36	6.9	19	3.7	216	59	8.1	7.8	12.6	263.2	97.4	76.9	24	176	4.4	7
2008	28	DAL	QB	9	13	13	8-5-0	276	450	61.3	3448	26	5.8	14	3.1	149	75	7.7	7.4	12.5	265.2	91.4	60.8	20	123	4.3	7
2009*	29	DAL	QB	9	16	16	11-5-0	347	550	63.1	4483	26	4.7	9	1.6	203	80	8.2	8.4	12.9	280.2	97.6	65.5	34	196	5.8	7
2010	30	DAL	QB	9	6	6	1-5-0	148	213	69.5	1605	11	5.2	7	3.3	73	69	7.5	7.1	10.8	267.5	94.9	66.4	7	41	3.2	7
2011	31	DAL	QB	9	16	16	8-8-0	346	522	66.3	4184	31	5.9	10	1.9	203	77	8.0	8.3	12.1	261.5	102.5	69.0	36	227	6.5	7
2012	32	DAL	QB	9	16	16	8-8-0	425	648	65.6	4903	28	4.3	**19**	2.9	232	85	7.6	7.1	11.5	306.4	90.5	65.4	36	263	5.3	6
2013	33	DAL	QB	9	15	15	8-7-0	342	535	63.9	3828	31	5.8	10	1.9	198	82	7.2	7.5	11.2	255.2	96.7	61.9	35	272	6.1	6
2014*	34	DAL	QB	9	15	15	12-3-0	304	435	**69.9**	3705	34	**7.8**	9	2.1	191	68	**8.5**	9.1	12.2	247.0	**113.2**	**79.7**	29	215	6.3	7
2015	35	DAL	QB	9	4	4	3-1-0	83	121	68.6	884	5	4.1	7	5.8	47	39	7.3	5.5	10.7	221.0	79.4	50.5	6	35	4.7	6
2016	36	DAL	QB	9	1	0		3	4	75	29	1	25	0	0	3	15	7.3	12.3	9.7	29.0	134.4	99.0	0	0	0	7
Career					**156**	**127**	**78-49-0**	**2829**	**4335**	**65.3**	**34183**	**248**	**5.7**	**117**	**2.7**	**1659**	**85**	**7.9**	**7.8**	**12.1**	**219.1**	**97.1**		**248**	**1672**	**5.4**	**7**

24 comebacks, 29 game-winning drives - full summary

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Adjusted Passing

Year	Age	Tm	Pos	No.	G	GS	QBrec	Att	Y/A+	NY/A+	AY/A+	ANY/A+	Cmp%+	TD%+	Int%+	Sack%+	Rate+
2006*	26	DAL	QB	9	16	10	6-4-0	337	**135**	**131**	123	122	117	118	88	104	119
2007*	27	DAL	QB	9	16	16	13-3-0	520	125	124	121	121	113	133	90	111	121
2008	28	DAL	QB	9	13	13	8-5-0	450	114	116	112	114	101	119	98	112	110
2009*	29	DAL	QB	9	16	16	11-5-0	550	122	121	123	122	107	107	118	101	117
2010	30	DAL	QB	9	6	6	1-5-0	213	108	115	106	110	128	110	95	123	112
2011	31	DAL	QB	9	16	16	8-8-0	522	119	116	122	120	120	119	115	98	123
2012	32	DAL	QB	9	16	16	8-8-0	648	109	110	105	106	117	100	97	109	106
2013	33	DAL	QB	9	15	15	8-7-0	535	100	99	109	108	109	116	113	102	113
2014*	34	DAL	QB	9	15	15	12-3-0	435	**131**	126	131	128	**130**	**138**	108	101	**134**
2015	35	DAL	QB	9	4	4	3-1-0	121	102	107	78	82	123	96	38	111	85
Career					**156**	**127**	**78-49-0**	**4335**									

Rushing & Receiving

				Games		Rushing								Receiving										Total Yds			
Year	Age	Tm	Pos	No.	G	GS	Rush	Yds	TD	1D	Lng	Y/A	Y/G	A/G	Tgt	Rec	Yds	Y/R	TD	1D	Lng	R/G	Y/G	Ctch%	Y/Tgt	Touch	Y/Tch	YScm	RRTD
2005	25	DAL	QB	9	16	0	2	-2	0		-1	-1.0	-0.1	0.1												2	-1.0	-2	0
2006*	26	DAL	QB	9	16	10	34	102	0	9	16	3.0	6.4	2.1												34	3.0	102	0
2007*	27	DAL	QB	9	16	16	31	129	2	8	17	4.2	8.1	1.9												31	4.2	129	2
2008	28	DAL	QB	9	13	13	28	41	0	4	15	1.5	3.2	2.2												28	1.5	41	0
2009*	29	DAL	QB	9	16	16	35	105	1	5	17	3.0	6.6	2.2												35	3.0	105	1
2010	30	DAL	QB	9	6	6	6	38	0	2	14	6.3	6.3	1.0	0	0	11		0	0	11	0.0	1.8	0.0%		6	8.2	49	0
2011	31	DAL	QB	9	16	16	22	46	1	4	17	2.1	2.9	1.4												22	2.1	46	1
2012	32	DAL	QB	9	16	16	30	49	1	6	15	1.6	3.1	1.9	1	1	-1	-1.0	0	0	-1	0.1	-0.1	100.0%	-1.0	31	1.5	48	1
2013	33	DAL	QB	9	15	15	20	38	0	5	15	1.9	2.5	1.3												20	1.9	38	0
2014*	34	DAL	QB	9	15	15	26	61	0	6	21	2.3	4.1	1.7												26	2.3	61	0
2015	35	DAL	QB	9	4	4	4	13	0	1	12	3.3	3.3	1.0												4	3.3	13	0
Career					**156**	**127**	**238**	**620**	**5**	**50**	**21**	**2.6**	**4.0**	**1.5**	**1**	**1**	**10**	**10.0**	**0**	**0**	**11**	**0.0**	**0.1**	**100.0%**	**10.0**	**239**	**2.6**	**630**	**5**

Defense & Fumbles

				Games		Def Interceptions					Fumbles					Tackles					
Year	Age	Tm	Pos	No.	G	GS	Int	Yds	TD	Lng	PD	FF	Fmb	FR	Yds	TD	Sk	Comb	Solo	Ast	TFL	QBHits	Sfty
2006*	26	DAL	QB	9	16	10						0	9	3	-20	0	0.0						
2007*	27	DAL	QB	9	16	16						0	10	5	-4	0	0.0						
2008	28	DAL	QB	9	13	13						0	13	3	-29	0	0.0						
2009*	29	DAL	QB	9	16	16						0	6	2	-5	0	0.0						
2011	31	DAL	QB	9	16	16						0	6	6	-3	0	0.0						
2012	32	DAL	QB	9	16	16						0	6	2	-15	0	0.0						
2013	33	DAL	QB	9	15	15						0	4	4	-6	0	0.0						
2014*	34	DAL	QB	9	15	15						0	7	3	-13	0	0.0						
2015	35	DAL	QB	9	4	4						0	1	1	0	0	0.0						
Career					**156**	**127**						**0**	**62**	**29**	**-95**	**0**	**0.0**						

Scoring Summary

Year	Age	Tm	Pos	No.	G	GS	RshTD	RecTD	PR TD	KR TD	FbITD	IntTD	OthTD	AllTD	2PM	2PA	D2P	XPM	XPA	FGM	FGA	Sfty	Pts	Pts/G
2006*	26	DAL	QB	9	16	10									1								2	0.1
2007*	27	DAL	QB	9	16	16	2							2									12	0.8
2009*	29	DAL	QB	9	16	16	1							1									6	0.4

Snap Counts

					Games		Off.		Def.		ST	
Year	Age	Tm	Pos	No.	G	GS	Num	Pct	Num	Pct	Num	Pct
2012	32	DAL	QB	9	16	16	1089	99%	0	0%	0	0%
2013	33	DAL	QB	9	15	15	920	99%	0	0%	0	0%
2014*	34	DAL	QB	9	15	15	968	97%	0	0%	0	0%
2015	35	DAL	QB	9	4	4	232	82%	0	0%	0	0%
2016	36	DAL	QB	9	1	0	7	13%	0	0%	0	0%
Career							**3216**		**0**		**0**	

Similar Players

NumYrs	Players whose career was of similar quality and shape
3	Chad Pennington, Trent Green, Bubby Brister, Tommy Kramer, Gary Danielson, Alex Smith, Mike Phipps, Greg Landry, Eric Hipple, Scott Mitchell
4	Philip Rivers, Matthew Stafford, Joe Montana*, Greg Landry, Jeff Blake, Trent Green, Drew Brees, Tommy Kramer, Randall Cunningham, Troy Aikman*
5	Trent Green, Matt Hasselbeck, Colin Kaepernick, Jeff Blake, Jim Hart, Philip Rivers, Tommy Kramer, Drew Brees, Matthew Stafford, Roger Staubach*
6	Trent Green, Jeff Blake, Carson Wentz, Dak Prescott, Matt Hasselbeck, Roger Staubach*, Matthew Stafford, Mark Rypien, Drew Brees, Steve McNair
7	Brian Sipe, Jameis Winston, Matt Hasselbeck, Mark Rypien, Scott Mitchell, Roger Staubach*, Ken Stabler*, Colin Kaepernick, Matt Schaub, Doug Williams
8	Aaron Brooks, Brian Sipe, Matt Hasselbeck, Roger Staubach*, Terry Bradshaw*, Kirk Cousins, Ken Stabler*, Michael Vick, Jim Everett, Derek Carr
9	Terry Bradshaw*, Joe Namath*, Drew Bledsoe, Matt Hasselbeck, Boomer Esiason, Ken Stabler*, Roger Staubach*, Jim Everett, Matthew Stafford, Ron Jaworski
10	Mark Brunell, Drew Bledsoe, Terry Bradshaw*, Matthew Stafford, Steve McNair, Boomer Esiason, Joe Namath*, Trent Green, Ken Stabler*, Joe Montana*
11	Matthew Stafford, Terry Bradshaw*, Steve McNair, Mark Brunell, Boomer Esiason, Joe Namath*, John Elway*, Ken Anderson, Roger Staubach*, Ken Stabler*
12	Matthew Stafford, Mark Brunell, Joe Namath*, Boomer Esiason, Terry Bradshaw*, Roger Staubach*, Steve McNair, Ken Stabler*, Michael Vick, Joe Theismann
13	Matthew Stafford, Mark Brunell, Alex Smith, Roger Staubach*, Joe Namath*, Steve McNair, Michael Vick, Joe Theismann, Boomer Esiason, Ken Stabler*
Career	Matthew Stafford, Mark Brunell, Roger Staubach*, Joe Namath*, Steve McNair, Joe Theismann, Alex Smith, Michael Vick, Jim Kelly*, Jim Everett

Appearances on Leaderboards, Awards, and Honors

Awards	AP MVP Shares	AP OPOY Shares	Pro Bowls
Player of the Week	**Player of the Month**	**Approximate Value**	**Approximate Value (Weighted)**
		2007 NFL 17 (7)	Career 95 (196)
Passes Completed	**Pass Attempts**	**Passing Yds**	**Passing TD**
Career 2829 (38)	Career 4335 (53)	Career 34183 (37)	Career 248 (24)
Passer Rating	**Long Pass**	**Passes Intercepted**	**Sacked**
2014 NFL 113.2 (1/13)		**2012 NFL 19 (1)**	Career 248 (87)
Career 97.1 (11)		Career 117 (93)	

Career 7.9 (8)

Pass Attempts/Game
Career 27.8 (75)

Adj Yds/Pass Att
Career 7.81 (9)

Net Yds/Pass Att
2006 NFL 7.76 (1/42)
Career 7.09 (4)

Adj Net Yds/Pass Att
Career 7.03 (9)

Passes Completed/Game
Career 18.1 (50)

Pass Completion %
2014 NFL 69.9% (1/21)
Career 65.3% (13)

Pass Intercept. %
Career 2.7% (49)

Passing TD %
2014 NFL 7.8% (1/53)
Career 5.7% (21)

Sack %
Career 5.41% (38)

QBR
2014 NFL 79.7 (1/11)

Game-Winning Drives
Career 29 (22)

Comebacks
2012 NFL 5 (1/11)
Career 24 (21)

Pass Completion % Idx
2014 NFL 130 (1/64)

Yds/Pass Att Idx
2006 NFL 135 (1/50)
2014 NFL 131 (1/76)

Adj Yds/Pass Att Idx

Net Yds/Pass Att Idx
2006 NFL 131 (1/44)

Adj Net Yds/Pass Att Idx

Pass Intercept. % Idx

Sack % Idx

Passing TD % Idx
2014 NFL 138 (1/29)

Passer Rating Idx
2014 NFL 134 (1/45)

2-pt. Conv. Made
Career 2 (114)

Total Offense
Career 33131 (39)

Fumbles
Career 62 (94)

Fumbles Recovered
2011 NFL 6 (1/52)
Career 29 (35)

Hall of Fame Monitor

PFR HOF Monitor: **45.78** (57th among QB, average HOF QB is 104.14)

All-Pro Teams

Year	Tm	Level	Pos	Voters
2014	2nd Tm		QB	Associated Press

Fantasy

Year	Age	G	FantPos	FantPt	VBD	PosRank	OvRank
2004	24	6				75	
2005	25	16	QB			77	
2006	26	16	QB	174		16	
2007	27	16	QB	295	91	2	10
2008	28	13	QB	204		12	
2009	29	16	QB	274	46	6	34
2010	30	6	QB	99		29	
2011	31	16	QB	276	53	7	25
2012	32	16	QB	279	28	8	51
2013	33	15	QB	261	2	10	71
2014	34	15	QB	266	1	11	73
2015	35	4	QB	41		41	
2016	36	1	QB	5		58	
				2174			

Combine Measurements

Year	Pos	Ht	Wt	40yd	Bench	Broad Jump	Shuttle	3Cone	Vertical
2003	QB	74	230	5.01		105	4.20	7.11	30.0

Transactions

April 4, 2017: The Dallas Cowboys released QB Tony Romo.

November 16, 2016: The Dallas Cowboys activated QB Tony Romo.

November 13, 2016: De-Activated

November 9, 2016: The Dallas Cowboys activated QB Tony Romo.

November 6, 2016: De-Activated

Show 19 more transactions



Dot Ford Burrow

Nomination Form

HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

Name of Nominee: Dot Ford Burrow
(first, middle, last)

Individual Submitting Nomination:

Name: LeAnna Dawson

Phone: 601-502-5249

Street Address: MHSAA 1201 Clinton Raymond Road

City, State, Zip Code: Clinton, Mississippi 39056

Signed: LeAnna Dawson

Email: ldawson@misshsaa.com

State Association Verification? True

NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:

Athletes

Name of Nominee: Dot Ford Burrow
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: 516 Meadowbrook Circle
(street address)

Amory, Mississippi 38821
(city, state, zip)

Email: jburrowllc@gmail.com

Phone: _____ Date of Birth: 9/21/1931

School Affiliation (if any) _____

City: _____ State: _____

Place of Birth: Itawamba County, Mississippi Date of Retirement: _____

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated? _____

If yes, please explain:

If deceased, date of death:

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: _____

Address: , , _____

Phone: _____

Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Smithville HS	Amory, Mississippi	1950	
College/University:			
Post Graduate School:			

Athletes

Participation/Career Description/Biography:

All tournament team Amory Invitational
All Monroe County
All District
All State
3 time leading scorer
Within present classifications her school would be a 3A

Contributions Athletics/NFHS/Education Philosophy:

Personal Records/Honors/Awards

All time record holder for girls and boys 1949-
1,481 points in a single season
2 time Monroe County Tournament Champs
District and Sub-District champs senior year

Professional Achievements

Other Information

When reviewing Dot Ford Burrow's high school career, one has to ask what if Title 9 had been a few decades earlier. With her athletic prowess and genuine media appeal she certainly would have been an NCAA tournament stand out. This of course is speculation. In reality what we are left with is a female athlete whose love of competition and sport has lived on through her family. Her competitive spirit passed on to subsequent generations. She is the classic tale, of similar female athletes before her, paving the way for small town legends to be formed. All girls in and around Smithville HS have a role model and a level of excellence to strive for. Mrs. Burrow used her on court leadership skills to become the family matriarch and standard bearer. Still today she is community legend as well as one of its most revered citizens.

Letters of Recommendation

Mississippi High School Activities Association, Inc.

1201 Clinton/Raymond Road, Clinton, MS 39056
P.O. Box 127 Clinton, MS 39060
601-924-6400 Fax: 601-924-1725

www.misshsaa.com

Rickey Neaves, Executive Director
Adam Dillinger, President
Lesley McLendon, Chief Financial Officer
Keith Warren, Technology Director

Lonnie Tillman, Associate Director
LeAnna Dawson, Assistant Director
Greg Freeman, Director of Officials
Tim Shramek, Director of Eligibility

Dorothy (Dot) Ford Burrow's grandson Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow was the first pick in the 2020 National Football League draft. In 2019 Joe put together arguably the most successful single season ever by a college quarterback when he won the Heisman Trophy by the largest margin in history and led LSU to a perfect 15-0 record and national championship. But Joe may never surpass his grandmother's accomplishments during the 1949-50 basketball season at Smithville High School in rural North Mississippi. The rangy 5'-10" Dot, believe it or not, scored a nifty 82 points in establishing an all-time record in leading her Smithville team to an 88-39 win over Caledonia back in February, 1950. Her boyfriend and future husband James Burrow played basketball at Mississippi State and brought his Bulldog teammates to Dot's 82-point game. The town of Smithville's population was only 419, but when Dot played, the gym crowds exceeded 1, 000.

On that night, she broke her records of 68 and 72 points from earlier that year. In 30 games that season, Dot scored 1,481 points in averaging an amazing 49 points per contest. That is scoring 1.76 points per minute, and she didn't even play every minute of every game. In three Regional Tournament games she averaged 52 points per game her senior year.

Dot could out jump and was faster than any other player on the court. Her lowest point total her senior season was 17 points on a night when she played only one quarter because she was sick. Her next lowest total that season was 34 points.

In 2020 Smithville High School gave a fitting tribute to Dot in naming the girls' basketball locker room "The Dot Burrow Locker Room."

As Executive Director of the Mississippi High School Activities Association, I am honored to nominate Dorothy (Dot) Ford Burrow for the National Federation High School Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

Ricky Neaves

Rickey Neaves

October 25, 2023

Mrs. LeAnna Dawson
Assistant Director of Activities

Dear Mrs. Dawson,

I am writing to recommend my grandmother Dorothy (Dot) Burrow for the National High School Hall of Fame. My first recollection of learning about her phenomenal basketball career was at an early age when visiting her home in Amory, Ms. My dad would show me her scrapbook filled with articles of unbelievable accomplishments including scoring 82 points in a game and 72 in another. As a freshman at Fulton High School, she was the high scorer in Fulton's 1946-47 Mississippi Girls High School State Championship win, and as a senior at Smithville High School (1949-50) averaged 49 points per game.

Throughout my basketball career, I always wanted to score points like my grandmother, but I never did, not even on the football field. She didn't let me forget it either. Whenever I was on the phone with her and feeling good about my point total, she would jokingly remind me I was a long way off from her record of 82 points.

When asked about my grandmother's feats on the basketball court during an interview with ESPN in 2019, I posed the question "was my grandmother better than Kobe Bryant". My answer now, as it was then, is I don't know. But what I do know is that she was an incredible athlete and a generational basketball player, and arguably the best athlete in the family. Knowing how great she was motivated me to be the best I could be in all sports. This drive for excellence has helped me achieve my lifelong dream of becoming a quarterback in the NFL.

I am confident that my grandmother, Dorothy Ford Burrow, is worthy of consideration for the National High School Hall of Fame. She is a living legend at 92 years old, and it would be a very deserving honor.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Joe Burrow
Quarterback, Cincinnati Bengals



October 27, 2023

Hall of Fame Committee,

Dorothy (Dot) Ford Burrow is our grandmother, and we support her nomination to the National High School Hall of Fame.

Having grown up in Fredericksburg, Va., we lived a long distance from our grandparents in Amory, Ms. Although this distance made it difficult for them to see their grandchildren grow up, it certainly didn't stop them from demonstrating their love and support for us. We remember the calls after every significant childhood event, and especially after our ballgames. The calls were always filled with genuine interest, encouragement, and love … memories we'll always cherish.

As children, we were told countless stories about our grandparent's athletic accomplishments which at times seemed closer to "tall tales" than fact. In a family so centered around the world of sports and populated by so many athletes, lines often blurred between fact and fiction of such great feats. It wasn't until we were adults that by happenstance, we stumbled across an old dusty scrapbook at our grandparent's house. In the scrapbook's yellowed pages, stories detailed the incredible athleticism of our grandmother and made us realize that the tall tales were in fact true.

In reviewing the articles, we also found a new appreciation for the way that our grandmother stood out in a period when women's success was the subject of little conversation. It was through showcasing of her exceptional abilities on the basketball court that our grandmother, Dorothy Ford Burrow, brought attention, recognition, and an appreciation of women's excellence in athletics. She was a trail blazer who, over 80 years ago, demonstrated to all what women could accomplish when given the opportunity.

Our grandmother's press and credentials demonstrate without a doubt that she was a superstar in 1949-50. In the Memphis Commercial Appeal article *Smithville's Dot Ford Tallies 1481 Points In 30 Cage Games* dated March 9, 1950, the reporter stated, "she is nothing short of sensational … her unbelievable record speaks for itself". Even today she is nothing short of sensational. She has been a role model, a mentor, a super-fan (for all her grandchildren), and a loving and caring person who has had a significant influence on her family, friends, and the entire community.

Thank you for considering our grandmother for this elite honor. We are as proud of her as she is of us. Because of this we urge you to induct Dorothy Ford Burrow, a loving grandmother and a spectacular role model to women and athletes everywhere, into the National High School Hall of Fame.

Taylor Burrow Bezerra (Granddaughter)
Burke, Virginia

Jasce Burrow (Grandson)
Richmond, Virginia

Peyton Burrow (Granddaughter)
Crozet, Virginia

Addison Burrow (Grandson)
Charlottesville, Virginia

To the Hall of Fame Selection Committee,

Every football fan in America knows about Joe Burrow, the football quarterback who led LSU to a national championship and the Cincinnati Bengals to the Super Bowl. And most assume that Burrow's athletic gifts come mostly from his father, Jimmy, who was a defensive back on a national championship football team at Nebraska and then played professional football.

But that's not the case, not totally. Dot Burrow, Joe's paternal grandmother, was one of the greatest female basketball players in Mississippi history at tiny Smithville High School in northeast Mississippi. Better to let Joe Burrow, the All-Pro quarterback, tell the story. When somebody once mentioned to Joe Burrow that Kobe Bryant once scored 81 points in a game, Joe replied, "Yeah, but Kobe's still one point short of my Grandma!"

That's right, Dot Burrow, then Dot Ford, scored 82 points against nearby Caledonia in a high school game. Newspaper reports said she was double-teamed the entire game. It was no fluke. Dot Ford averaged 49.5 points per game for the entire 30-game season.

Joe Burrow was an all-state basketball player in Ohio, highly recruited in that sport as well. But Joe averaged 20 points a game as a senior. The fewest points his grandma, Dot Burrow scored in a game her senior season was 22.

Actually, both of Joe's paternal grandparents were fine athletes. James Burrow, his granddad, played first at Amory High school and then at Mississippi State where he was the starting point guard. But James, now 93, will tell you quickly his then-girlfriend, Dot, was the better basketball player.

"When I was at State, I told all my teammates about my girlfriend back in Smithville who was averaging 50 points a game," James Burrow said. "Nobody believed me, so I took a couple of them to a game when Smithville played near Starkville in Hamilton. Well, she scored 72 that night."

A few nights later, nearly the entire State team went to nearby Caledonia to watch the amazing Dot Ford. "That was the night she scored 82, breaking her own state record," James Burrow said.

Asked whether he ever played his future wife in a game of H-O-R-S-E, James Burrow chuckled and answered, "Oh no, I didn't want to mess with her."

Sadly, 76 years ago, there was no place for Dot Ford to play basketball after her high school days. Her career ended with high school graduation. Although she still holds the single-season and single-game scoring records for Mississippi high school girls basketball, she never received the recognition she richly deserves. That can change.

What better time than now?

Respectfully,

Rick Cleveland
Mississippi Today sports columnist

October 27, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

It is truly an honor to write a letter recommending Dot Ford Burrow to the Mississippi State High School Association Hall of Fame. It is an award which I think is long overdue. She was without a doubt one of the greatest female basketball players in Mississippi history during the 3-on-3 years. I have personally known Dot since 1964 as a next door neighbor and personal friend. To better explain her talent, many a day I have watched Dot allow her two sons and one daughter to take a first shot in a game of "Horse" in the backyard. She would then make all six of the required shots and it was "game over"! As a young kid growing up in Aberdeen, Mississippi I cannot remember a single person that had a bigger impact than Dot Ford Burrow on the kids of Monroe County with regard to her basketball ability. She was a spectacular basketball player and has been just as spectacular in her role as wife, mother, and grandmother. I highly endorse Dot's induction into the Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

Jim Walden

Support Data

Dorothy (Dot) Ford Basketball Accomplishment

Personal Information



Name: Dorothy (Dot) Ford Burrow
Maiden Name: Dorothy Faye Ford
Date of Birth: September 21, 1931
Current Address:
516 Meadowbrook Circle
Amory, Mississippi 38821

High Schools

Itawamba High School (1946 - 1947) Freshman
Smithville High School (1947 - 1950) Sophomore, Junior, Senior

Team Accomplishments

Itawamba Agriculture High School - Fulton, Mississippi

- Mississippi Girls High School State Champions (Ref: 1, 5, 21)
  - Freshman Season (1946 – 1947)

Smithville High School – Smithville, Mississippi

- Amory Invitational Tournament (Ref: 7, 20)
  - Senior Season (1949-1950)
- Monroe County (MS) Country Championship (Ref: 22)
  - Sophomore Season (1947 – 1948)
  - Junior Season (1948 – 1949)
- District Championship (Ref:22)
  - Senior Season (1949 – 1950
- Sub – Regionals Championship (Ref: 17)
  - Senior Season (1949 – 1950)



Individual Honors

- All-Tournament Team Amory Invitational (Ref: 7)
  - Senior Season (1949 – 1950)
- All Monroe County (Ref:22)
  - Sophomore Season (1947 – 1948)
  - Junior Season (1948 – 1949)
  - Senior Season (1949-1950)
- All District (Ref:22)
  - Senior Season (1949 – 1950)
- All State (Ref: 22)
  - Senior Season (1949 – 1950)

Individual Accomplishments

- High Scorer (14 Points) 1946-47 Mississippi Girls High School Championship Game (Ref: 21)
- 1,481 Points in a Single Season (1949 – 1950) (Ref:21)
- 49 Points Per Game Average (1949 – 1950) (Ref: 21)
- Averaged 1.76 Points Per Minute (1949 – 1950) (Ref: 21)
- Individual Scoring Record 1949-1950 Season (Ref: 3)
- 3-Time Leading Scorer Smithville High School (47/48, 48/49, 49/50 Seasons) (Ref: 1)
- All-Time-Record (Perhaps) for Most Points in a Game for Northeast Mississippi Boys and Girls (1949 – 1950) (Ref: 12)
- B-BB Regional Tournament High Scorer (157 Points in Three Games) (Ref: 19)
- Single Game High Scores (1949 – 1950)
    - 82 Points Against Caledonia High School (Ref: 1, 3, 5, 12)
    - 72 Points Against Hatley (Ref: 1, 3, 4, 12)
    - 66 Points Against Moorville (Ref: 19)
    - 58 Points Against Becker (Ref: 13)
    - 58 Points Against Hamilton (Ref: 16)
    - 56 Points Against Becker (Ref: 17)
    - 52 Points Against Greenwood Springs (Ref: 10,14)
    - 52 Points Against Kosuth (ref: 18)
    - 44 Points Against Tremont (Ref: 7, 8, 11, 15, 20)
    - 41 Points Against Nettleton – In a Half (Ref: 2)
    - 39 Points Against Belmont (Ref: 19)
    - Against Unknown Teams Dot scored 69, 68, 64, and 64 points (Ref: 4, 5)

"Fun Facts"

- Smithville's population in 1950 was 419. Gym crowds to watch her play twice exceeded 1,000. (Ref: 15, 19)
- Her senior year she averaged 1.76 points per minute, computed based on her playing every minute of every game … but she didn't play every minute of every game. (Ref: 21)
- Her boyfriend and future husband James Burrow played basketball at Mississippi State and brought his teammates to watch the night she scored 82 points … on the ride back to Mississippi State they said he wished he could do the same. (Ref: 22)

- In one game she only scored 17 points, but she didn't play after the first quarter due to illness. (Ref: 21)

- Amory High School put one player on another player's shoulders to try and stop her ... she scored 52 points. (Ref 22)

- Descriptors by the press:
    - "Queen" (Ref: 3)
    - "High scoring lassie" (Ref:13)
    - "One of the top basketeers in the State" (Ref: 5)
    - "Goal Popping Dot" (Ref: 19)
    - "She has the ability to jump right on up to the hoop" (Ref: 14)
    - She "scorched the twine" (Ref: 11)
    - "Points-Per-Second Ford" (Ref: 16)
    - "Nothing short of sensational" (Ref: 21)
    - "Hamilton felt the Sting of Dot" (Ref: 16)
    - "Dot pitched in a nifty 82" (Ref: 12)

- "People in these parts are going to long remember the Ford lassie" ... Reporter's observation after watching her score 52 points in a game. (Ref: 14)

- In 2020 Smithville High School named the girls basketball locker room "Dot Burrow Locker Room" ... 70 years after her record-breaking season.





Jackson Daily Paper

1

Smithville Girl Holds 54 Point Score Average

Smithville, Jan. 27 — Those shots of Dot Ford, offensive ace of the Smithville High basketball team, kepp pouring through the basket.

In 12 games this year, Miss Ford has hit the hoop for 648 points, an average of 54 per game. Her highest single game score was made Tuesday night against Caledonia when she registered 82 of her team's 91 points.

A senior this year, Miss Ford is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dew Ford. She started her basketball career with Fulton in 1946-47. The past two years she played with Smithville.

Her 648 points this year surpasses the marks she made each of the last two years when she led the team's scoring. Her second best game score was 71 points against Hatley. The

ests

2

Smithville Six Wins 24th Game

Dot Ford Racks Up 41 Counters To Lead

SMITHVILLE, — (Special) — Smithville's girls ran their winning streak to 24 here Wednesday night by defeating Nettleton 64-38 behind the first-half goal tossing of Dot Ford.

The win didn't take much effort on the part of the host club and the second team did all the work in the third period. Ford found the range for a total of 41 counters, three more than the combine Nettleton team, while Markham took 12 in tow while Ford was resting.

Pauline Moore for Nettleton led her team with 23 points while Riley got 13.

However, the visiting boys managed to mark up a win, scoring 34 points while Smithville tallied 32. Crutcher paced the host club with 12 points while Ramage racked up 10 for the winning combine. Smithville girls meet Kossuth in the B-BB Regional tournament at 4 p.m., Friday at the Tupelo gym.

3

Miss Dorothy Ford, maybe "Queen" would be more enlightening, became dissatisfied with having scored 72 points in one game to hold the individual scoring record for the 1949-50 season, and Tuesday night bettered it by 10 counters. Of the 88 points racked up by her Smithville club, Dot dropped 82 through the basket.

We don't know if she'll pull above that mark this season but she'll have to hit better than 95 to set an all-time scoring record. Somewhere in basketball history we understand there's a gal that scored a few counters short of 100 points in a single affair. Of course we think Dot could hit the 100 mark if she really went into the fray at top speed and operated all the way at the same gait.

But we aren't recommending that she go to 100—she can be the judge about her basketball a[illegible] we'll all have to admit it's above par.

4

WE HAVE SOME NEW INFO

Dot Ford, the high-scoring Smithville forward, has come up with a new scoring record for a single game. Against Hatley, our informant told us Thursday night, Miss Ford sent 72 points through the hoop. Looks like the Shady Grove lassie, Hortense Simpson, had better get on the ball. Ford also scored 69 points in another game and 64 counters on two occasions.

Now basketball players now have taken it out on the score keeper. The water boy had better re[illegible] if he values his health.

13

Dot Ford Shows Way For Smithville Girls Win

AMORY — (Special) — Dot Ford, Smithville ace forward, fired 58 points into the basket here Thursday night against Becker to enable her team to win 69-59. The high-scoring lassies fouled out in the fourth period but her team held onto the lead closed the record book and gained a chance to meet the top-bracket semi-finalist.

Turner for Becker grabbed off 38 points in losing game played in the Amory invitational tourney. Smithville boys made it two for their school by beating the Becker lads 54-19. Funderburk with 15 points paced the winners and Renfro got seven for Becker.

Hatley boys edged by Okolona 41-40 in the third game of the second round of the tourney with Huel Riddle showing the way with 14 points. Griffin tossed 13 counters in the bucket for the losers.

In the final game Thursday night, Amory girls had an easy time defeating Wren 69-26. Peggy Moore hit the net with 36 points for Amory and Harlow tallied 12 for Wren in the losing cause.

In today's and tonight's games, Greenwood Springs girls meet [illegible]man at 1 p.m., Hatley [illegible] boys at 2 p. [illegible] with point at 8 p.m. and the Smithville and Amory boys close the door at 9.

14

Ford Gets Top Money

We took an opportunity to watch Dot Ford present title holder for single game scoring job in the current season, Saturday afternoon against Greenwood Springs and for our money she can play basketball. Of course she didn't set any new record in the game (she scored 52 points), but her cage ability was felt in the Amory tournament.

In addition to being taller than most gals on basketball teams in this state, she has the ability to jump right on up to the hoop. Even a tall guard has got to be able to jump between 18 inches and two feet to prevent Dot from tumbling the cowhide into the socket. She is far from one of those "permanent fixtures" under the basket. We doubt if Smithville will come tearing out of Monroe County with contention toward a B-BB crown but people in these here parts are going to long remember this Ford lassie.

15

SMITHVILLE GIRLS WIN

Pontotoc Boys Share Honors In Amory Tourney

AMORY, Miss., Jan. 22.—Smithville girls and Pontotoc boys were crowned champions Saturday night in the Amory Invitational tournament before a crowd of 1200. Smithville girls eked out Tremont, 70-69, and Pontotoc prevailed 52-41.

Tremont took a first quarter lead 25-18, held on 40-34 at halftime but began to lose its grip when their all-star guard Ridge went out on fouls. Ridge was holding Dot Ford, who has averaged 50 points per game, to a respectable 16. Ford began hitting the basket and scored 28 counters in the second half to lead her team to victory. While Ridge held Ford in the first half Markham, who usually fires the ball to Ford, put away 18 points of her own to hold Smithville in the ball game.

Pontotoc proved too accurate for Hatley to handle, although Riddle hit the basket for the losers for 13 points in the last half. The entire Pontotoc first team was named on the all-star squad.

Smithville girls climbed to the finals by beating Becker 69-59, and Greenwood Springs 58-47. Tremont won over Pontotoc 66-50 and Amory 57-48. Pontotoc boys defeated Aberdeen 63-32 and Amory 45-29. Hatley triumphed over Okolona 41-40, Vardaman 53-34 and Tremont 35-23.

Teams entered in the event were Aberdeen, Amory, Smithville, Tremont, Sulligent, Hatley, Becker, Pontotoc, Greenwood Springs, Vardaman, Okolona and Wren.

GIRLS

Smithville (70)	Pos.	Tremont (69)
Ford 44	F	Wheeler 29
Markham 26	F	Pitts 27
Stevens	F	Hughes 13
Jackson	G	Ridge
Towery	G	Irod
Frederick	G	Steele

Subs: Tremont—Steele, McCallister, Holley, Bostic, Shamblee, Boozer. Smithville—Roberts.

BOYS

Pontotoc (52)	Pos.	Hatley (41)
Priest 10	F	Riddle 15
Byrd 4	F	Howell 8
Dillard 15	C	Tubbs 5
Clement, G. 4	G	Lacey 4
Leake 19	G	Colburn 9

16

Dot Ford And Smithville Beat Hamilton

SMITHVILLE — (Special) — Hamilton High School's girls basketball team felt the sting of Dot (Point-Per-Second) Ford and Company here Thursday night and became the 17th straight victim of Smithville's undefeated cage combine.

It was the first meeting of the two schools on regular schedule and Ford was the star performer on the floor. Ford scored 58 points to pace the Smithville girls to a 78-47 decision. Markham tallied nine counters for the winning girls while Stephens added four in pushing the host club over the hump.

For Hamilton, Lucas tallied 19 points to show the way while Oliver hit 14 and Welch 10. But the combined efforts of Hamilton's forwards couldn't keep pace with the goal tossing exhibition made by Ford. Hamilton tried every combination of guards in an effort to stop Ford but the tall, pretty forward continued to burn the net with two-pointers until she had pulled her club into the home path and the 17th win of the season.

But Hamilton's boys salvaged the remaining chips on the floor by defeating the host club 35-22. Cruber and Holloway each tallied five for Smithville but it wasn't enough to keep the victory at home.

Smithville has no more games scheduled until after the sub-region tournament and then will meet Caledonia on February 21 and Nettleton on February 23. Both games will be played at Smithville.

Smithville's Dot Ford Tallies 1481 Points In 30 Cage Games

Special To The Commercial Appeal

AMORY, Miss., March 9.—Dot Ford, Smithville, Miss., forward, is nothing short of sensational in basketball ability. Her unbelievable record speaks for itself.

In 30 games this season Miss Ford has scored 1481 points. This gives her an amazing average of 49 points per game. She broke the Mississippi record of 68 points in one game when she hit the net in one fray for 82 counters.

In nearly every contest she was guarded by two guards, back and front. (This is the Williams' shift of basketball.) Dot could outjump, or jump even with any guard and was fast on shots under the basket. Her lowest total in any single game was 17 on a night when she was ill and played only one quarter. Her next lowest total was 34.

In 1946 when she was only 14, Dot was a starter on the Fulton state championship sextet and scored 14 points in the state final game.

She led Smithville to establishing the finest girls' record in North Mississippi. Of 30 contests, Smithville won 28 and lost only two, both by one point. In the Northeast Tourney (state playoffs) Smithville was upset in the semi-finals by Saltillo in a thriller 55-54. Saltillo went on to win the Northeast championship over Belmont. The other loss came in the Monroe County Tournament finals to Greenwood Springs in a wild contest 37-36 last week end.



DOT FORD

21



Sara DeCosta-Hayes

Nomination Form

HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

Name of Nominee: Sara DeCosta-Hayes
(first, middle, last)

Individual Submitting Nomination:

Name: Michael Lunney

Phone: 401-272-9844

Street Address: 875 Centerville Rd., Bldg. #3, Suites 7 & 8

City, State, Zip Code: Warwick, Rhode Island 02886

Signed: Michael Lunney

Email: mike@riil.org

State Association Verification? True

NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:

Athletes

Name of Nominee: Sara DeCosta-Hayes
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: 1 Crescent Rd.
(street address)

Middletown, Rhode Island 02842
(city, state, zip)

Email: sdecosta@yahoo.com

Phone: 401-474-6789 Date of Birth: 5/13/1977

School Affiliation (if any) _____

City: _____ State: _____

Place of Birth: Warwick, Rhode Island Date of Retirement: _____

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated? __Yes_____

If yes, please explain:
DeCosta serves as an assistant coach for the St. George's School Varsity Hockey Team.

If deceased, date of death:

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: _____

Address: , , _____

Phone: _____

Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Toll Gate High School	Warwick, Rhode Island	1996	High School Diploma
College/University: Providence College	Providence, Rhode Island	2000	
Post Graduate School:			

Athletes

Participation/Career Description/Biography:

In 1992, DeCosta-Hayes became the first girl to play in the R.I. Interscholastic League Championship Division as a member of the Toll Gate High School boys hockey team. Twice named her team's MVP (1995 and 1996), her outstanding play in net helped Toll Gate become the first public school in 14 years to reach the best-of-three title round, where the Titans faced perennial power Mount St. Charles.

She also played softball and soccer at Toll Gate, earning All-State honors in softball and helping the Titans capture the 1995 and 1996 Division I Slow-pitch Championships. (The RIIL offered three divisions in soccer and two divisions in softball at that time, Division I being the highest.)

Contributions Athletics/NFHS/Education Philosophy:

Personal Records/Honors/Awards

High School Honors

- 1994 1st team, Providence Journal All-State softball team
- 1995 1st team, Providence Journal All-State softball team
- 1995 All-Tournament team, softball
- 1995 Providence Journal All-State hockey team
- 1994-95 Toll Gate MVP, hockey
- 1994 All-City soccer team

Collegiate Honors

- 1999 & 2000 All-American
- Providence College Female Athlete of the Year (1998 & 1999)
- All-American, 1999 & 2000
- ECAC All-Star Team, 1998 & 1999
- PC Female Athlete of the Year, 1998 & 1999
- ECAC 1990's All-Decade Team
- Graduated as PC's all-time saves leader
- Recorded 2,324 saves
- Registered a .929 save percentage
- Posted a 2.15 goals against average

Olympic Honors & Other Achievements

- U.S. Olympic gold medalist (1998) and silver medalist (2002)
- 2000 & 2002 USA Hockey Player of the Year.
- 2002 Athlete of the Year - USA Olympic Committee
- 2002 Sports Ethics Fellow by the Institute for International Sports
- 2000 humanitarian nominee
- Inducted into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame (2004)
- Inducted into the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame as a member of the 1998 U.S. Olympic Women's Ice Hockey Team (2009)
- Received the R. I. Reds Heritage Society’s first annual R. I. Native-Born Hockey Achievement Award (2010)
- Inducted into National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame
- Inducted into Providence College Athletic Hall of Fame (2011)
- Inducted into R.I. Interscholastic League High School Athletic Hall of Fame (2015)

Professional Achievements

Other Information

While establishing herself as one of the greatest goalies in Providence College history, DeCosta-Hayes was a goalie on the U.S. Women's Olympic Ice Hockey team that captured gold in the first-ever women's ice hockey tournament at the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan. Inducted with her team into the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame, she was in net for three Team USA victories, including one shutout, posting a 1.59 goals-against average and a .875 save percentage.

The USA Hockey Women's Player of the Year in 2000 and 2002, DeCosta-Hayes was also a member of the U.S. team that took silver at the 2002 Winter Games, where she owned the best goals-against average (1.01) and save percentage (.948), recording 26 saves in Team USA's 3-2 loss to Canada in the title game.

DeCosta-Hayes also played in the 2000 World Championships.

COACHING AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO YOUTH, INTERSCHOLASTIC & COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

- One of the divisions in the R.I. Interscholastic League girls hockey league has been named after DeCosta.
- DeCosta-Hayes has regularly visited schools throughout the state, sharing her experience as a member of the U.S. Olympic women's hockey team and speaking to kids about the importance of working hard in school.
- DeCosta-Hayes' philosophy on high school athletics: "High school sports are so important for kids because of the life lessons they learn. How to win and lose the right way, how to work with teammates, sportsmanship, leadership, all of those things carry over into every aspect of your life. I know for me, I learned so many life lessons that I took beyond high school, and a lot of my foundation came from my softball, soccer and hockey teams at Toll Gate."
- In 2012, DeCosta-Hayes and fellow Olympian Vicki Movsessian Lamoriello formed the Rhode Island Sting Girls Hockey Organization, which competes in the R.I. Amateur Hockey Association and provides opportunities for hundreds of girls, fielding teams from 8U Mites to 19U.
- Has served as an assistant women's ice hockey coach at Providence College and Harvard University, the goalies coach at Noble and Greenough School and an assistant coach for the St. George's School Varsity Hockey Team.
- Private goalie coach

PERSONAL INFO

- She and her husband, Mark Hayes, have three children - a daughter, Kiley, and twin boys, Cameron and Connor.
- RI Realtor at Gustave White Sotheby's International Realty

Support Data



Anna Maria Lopez

Nomination Form

HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

Name of Nominee: Anna Maria Lopez
(first, middle, last)

Individual Submitting Nomination:

Name: Steve Walker

Phone: 503-682-6722 ext. 232

Street Address: 25200 SW Parkway Ave., Suite 1

City, State, Zip Code: Wilsonville, Oregon 97070

Signed: Steve Walker

Email: stevew@osaa.org

State Association Verification? True

NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:

Athletes

Name of Nominee: Anna Maria Lopez
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: 5935 NE 23rd Ave.
(street address)

Portland, Oregon 97211
(city, state, zip)

Email: annamaria.lopez@smapdx.org

Phone: (503) 701-8905 Date of Birth: 2/19/1960

School Affiliation (if any) St. Mary's Academy

City: Portland State: Oregon

Place of Birth: Tacoma, Washington Date of Retirement: _____

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated? __Yes_____

If yes, please explain:
St. Mary's Academy Athletic Director, 1991 - present
Governance and committees for the Oregon School Activities Association and Oregon Athletic Directors Association

If deceased, date of death:

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: _____

Address: , ,

Phone: _____

Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: St. Mary's Academy	Portland, Oregon	1978	
College/University: University of Southern California	Los Angeles, California	1982	Bachelor's degree in physical education
Post Graduate School: Portland State University	Portland, Oregon	1982	Master's degree in teaching

Athletes

Participation/Career Description/Biography:

6-foot, 1-inch, 4-year multiple-sports star for the St. Mary's Academy Blues in Portland, Ore.
Competed in volleyball, basketball and track & field fall '74 through spring '78
St. Mary's Academy, an all-girls school, competed in class AAA, the largest of OSAA's four classifications at that time
Played in the first OSAA-sponsored state championships for volleyball and girls basketball
Volleyball
4-year letterwinner in volleyball
Played volleyball for Coach Rick Lorenz, inducted into the NFHS National High School Hall of Fame in 2015
Led her teams to the state tournament in 1974, '76 and '77
2-time volleyball state champion – 1976 and '77
Basketball
4-year letterwinner
Led her teams to the state championship tournament – 1976 (3rd), '77 (2nd)
Track & Field
3-year letterwinner
3-time Metro League discus and shot put champion
2-time discuss state champion
Qualified for state championships as a sophomore in 1976 in the shot put and discus (3rd place)
Qualified as a junior shot put, long jump and discus (1st)
Defended her discus state championship as a senior, but had to forgo competing in the shot as she had to catch a plane to New York for the Parade All-American basketball game

Contributions Athletics/NFHS/Education Philosophy:

Personal Records/Honors/Awards

7 all-state awards (volleyball – 3, basketball – 2, track & field – 2)
Volleyball
4-time All-Metro League (3-time 1st team)
3-time state championship all-tournament team
Basketball
Parade All-American – 1978
4-time All-Metro League (3-time 1st team)
2-time state championship all-tournament team
1979 Oregon Sports Awards Johnny Carpenter Prep Athlete off the Year (not gender specific)

Professional Achievements

Other Information

University of Southern California (1978-81)
USC Volleyball
4-year letterwinner
2-time volleyball national champion – 1980 and '81 (the last championship as the Association for Women Intercollegiate Athletics (AIAW) and the first as the NCAA
Two-time All-West Coast Athletic Association (WCAA) 2nd Team – 1979, '80
USC Basketball
2-year letterwinner
All-WCAA – 2nd Team (1979), Honorable Mention (1980)
David X. Marks Scholar-Athlete Award

CALIB (California Area Latino Broadcasters) Women's Collegiate Athlete of the Year
U.S. Junior Olympics Sports Festival (basketball) – 1979
World University Games (USA volleyball) in Bucharest, Romania – 1981
University of Oregon assistant volleyball coach – 1982
University of Portland assistant volleyball coach – 1994
Professional volleyball – Major League Volleyball all-star (Phoenix, Portland franchises)
Played fastpitch softball for 2 seasons for a local women's team in high school as there wasn't an interscholastic program in Oregon until 1979
Amateur Softball Association (ASA) All-American
Returned to her high school alma mater, St. Mary's Academy, as an assistant basketball coach in 1984
Joined the faculty at St. Mary's Academy as a health and physical education teacher and coach in 1985
Volleyball coach – 13 years (head coach 1995-2001)
Track & Field coach – 2 years (1985-87)
Basketball coach – 2 years (1984-86)
Received her masters degree from Portland State University in 1989 and became St. Mary's Academy's athletic director in '91
Metro League Volleyball Coach of the Year – 1995, '97 and '99
The Oregonian 4A Volleyball Coach of the Year – 1995
Oregon Athletic Coaches (OACA) Female Coach of the Year – 2001
Oregon Athletic Directors Association (OADA) Athletic Director of the Year – 2001 (4A), 2017 (6A)
Oregon Sports Awards Game Changer Award for Dedication to Prep Sports – 2016
National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) State Award of Merit – 2018
Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) Executive Board, 2023- present
OSAA PSA featuring Anna Maria Lopez
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPTKaeUQ3ls
The Education AD Podcast featuring Anna Maria Lopez
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBAsDtJSf0I
The Winged M magazine features Anna Maria Lopez
https://issuu.com/thewingedm/docs/jun22_wingedm/58?fbclid=IwAR133H_3hJa9L9Daxr6pUHkDWXRAaW608jPdMzu8-fikKEo-9LAXQ5Uc5yU

Letters of Recommendation

Oregon School Activities Association
25200 SW Parkway Avenue, Suite 1
Wilsonville, OR 97070
503.682.6722 fax: 503.682.0960 http://www.osaa.org

November 14, 2023

Bruce L. Howard
National Federation of State High School Associations
P.O. Box 690
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Dear Bruce,

With great honor, the Oregon School Activities Association nominates Anna Maria Lopez for the National High School Hall of Fame.

Written words such as “one-of-a-kind” and “best female athlete in Oregon history” are used to describe Anna Maria. She excelled at the state championship level in volleyball, basketball and track & field, earning seven all-state awards. She likely would have in softball as well, but the sport wasn’t yet designated an interscholastic activity. Instead, she joined a local fastpitch team and became an ASA All-American!

Nothing says multi-sport star like defending her discus state championship as a senior, but not being able to compete in the shot put she qualified for due to having to hustle to catch a plane to New York for the Parada All-America basketball game.

Her career at St. Mary’s Academy in Portland, Ore. started as a freshman student-athlete in 1974 and still is going strong 49 years later as the Blues’ athletic director, a position she has held since 1991. She never ceased to give back to her school and community as well as the Oregon School Activities Association. A member of several committees for decades, she currently represents the Oregon Athletic Directors Association as a member of the OSAA Executive Board.

One of eight children, Anna Maria identifies her parents and an athletic brother among the mentors in her life. She also mentions her St. Mary’s Academy coaches Kathy Kinyon and Rick Lorenz, a 2015 National High School Hall of Fame inductee. Both wrote recommendation letters as did Norm Maves, a retired sportswriter, who penned the 1978 feature that kicks off the support documents. He highlights Anna Maria the athlete again – 45 years later!

We encourage the screening committee to please listen to at least of few minutes of the podcast and public service announcement via links provided in the nomination. Anna Maria comes to life, discussing her high school careers as an athlete and administrator.

We feel Anna Maria is more than worthy of taking her place among the nation’s most honored high school athletes, especially with those previously inducted from Oregon where a seat at the table of only a few chairs for the state’s all-time best, girl or boy, is reserved for her.

Please accept this nomination for Anna Maria Lopez for the prestigious NFHS National High School Hall of Fame.

Thank you, Bruce, for considering this nomination.

Sincerely,

Peter Weber
OSAA Executive Director

Steve Walker
OSAA Sports Information Director

11/06/23

Steve Walker, Sports Information Director
Oregon School Activities Association
25200 /SW Parkway Ave., Suite 1
Wilsonville, Oregon 97070

Dear Steve,

Anna Maria Lopez is one in a million. Very few coaches will ever experience coaching such a remarkable individual in their lifetime. I coached her in basketball and track and field from 1975-1978 at St. Mary's Academy when girls were just experiencing the chance to compete thanks to Title IX.

She was blessed with a 6'1" frame that had an extraordinary ability to dominate any sport she attempted. Anna Maria was gifted physically but also had the mental package to achieve feats other athletes only dreamed of obtaining. Her inner drive to excel was boundless. I witnessed her win State Championships in Discus as well as State Second and Third Place in State Basketball. She produced wins just about every time she was on the court in basketball due to her physical presence and mental toughness. She won many awards for her basketball skills as All State in Basketball twice but was also honored as First Team Parade All American her senior year.

Anna Maria or "Ace" to all that knew her was a phenom of her time. She was recruited by many teams in the NCAA but chose USC. It is remarkable that she played volleyball four years and basketball three years on teams that were on their National Championships runs.

I can honestly say she was St. Mary's Academy's and the State of Oregon's Caitlin Clark of the day. We loved her as an athlete and most importantly a person. She has given back tenfold to her family, community, and athletic community during her playing days, coaching career, and professional life. We will always be indebted to her contributions. Oregon Sports Hall of Fame got it right by awarding her a Special Contribution to Sports Award.

Sincerely,

Kathy Kinyon

November 10, 2023

I'm writing this letter of recommendation for Anna Maria Lopez, an exceptional and one-of-a-kind athlete Whom I coached at St. Mary's Academy (all girls school) in Portland, Oregon.

I came to Portland from Seattle in the late Summer of 1976 to teach and coach volleyball at St. Mary's. In that first Fall season I inherited a special group of young women and a true talented star…Anna Maria Lopez. We went on that season to win the 4A state title with 10 talented seniors and two exceptional juniors. Anna Maria was one of those juniors. I was amazed at how much attention we drew from the media and fans considering that women's high school sports were in their early beginnings. Well, we had Anna Maria Lopez and she drew a lot of attention from the fans.

The next year, Anna Maria's senior year, we returned a very good senior setter and 10 JV players. Anna Maria's leadership and nurturing nature were keys in our winning a second straight state title. She carried the team all year and was unstoppable at the state tournament. Anna Maria brought out the best in her teammates because they really loved and believed in her. Anna Maria ended her senior year by being voted 1978 Oregon Prep Athlete of the Year (boy or girl).

Anna Maria Lopez was the best all-around athlete I ever coached in my 44 year volleyball coaching career. Six-foot, 2-inches and approximately 170 pounds, she was a tower of strength, agile, excellent jump reach, quick and fast for her size. A stellar 4 sport athlete in volleyball, basketball, track and field, and softball. In all my years of watching women's high school sports, I've never seen a better blocker(volleyball) or rebounder(basketball) than Anna Maria. Her strength and timing were amazing. But best of all, she remained humble, caring, and always put the team above any of her individual accolades.

Anna Maria was heavily recruited during her senior year by several West coast schools. She chose to go to USC, where she won two NCAA titles in volleyball. She also played basketball there for two years. I remember on our recruiting trip to U. Of Washington for volleyball and basketball, the crew coach saw Anna Maria and offered her a full ride to row crew. Her physical strength was God given.

After college, Anna Maria returned to her Alma Mater in 1985 to teach and coach. She was appointed as athletic director in 1991 and currently remains in that position. She remains a real advocate in promoting women's sports in the state of Oregon. She has served on several committees for the OSAA and is still the giving, caring woman I've kept in touch with all these years.

In closing, Anna Maria Lopez was a real pioneer for women's sports in the 1970's and 80's. She set the standard for Oregon's best all-around female athlete. She became the athlete that all after her are measured by. If you saw her play, you know that. If not, you know of her… and her legacy.
To this day, she is still on top…the best.

Sincerely, Rick Lorenz
*** Retired Art teacher and Volleyball coach — 2019
NFHS Hall of Fame Inductee — 2015

November 6, 2023

It is a privilege for me to be asked to write on behalf of Anna Maria Lopez's distinguished career as a high athlete at St. Mary's Academy in Portland.

I was there for all of it. When Anna Maria arrived on the athletic scene in the mid-1970s, I was covering high school sports for The Oregonian, the major daily newspaper in Portland. I arrived at the newspaper just as full-scale athletic programs for girls were exploding across the state — indeed, in the country.

To this day, I have never seen a female athlete in Oregon exactly like her. In the 47 years that have transpired since I first saw her on a volleyball court in the fall of 1976, only one other athlete comes close.

Anna Maria Lopez arrived at high school with a formidable athletic skill set. She wasn't just tall and strong. She was as fast or faster than anybody on any court or field. She was also marvelously coordinated, with a natural sense of balance and agility that you usually only see in much smaller athletes. She also had what all the greatest athletes have: A sense for the bigger picture of whatever game she was playing. Where to be, when to be there, and where all her teammates were. It's a gift.

It almost looked unfair. St. Mary's coaches could and did build entire teams around her. I saw her in volleyball, basketball and track and field. She led her school to championships, brought distinction to herself and her school and earned just about every accolade for which she was eligible.

One more thing: She did all this with the grace, class and humility you hope for in someone that young. Her kind of fame can be a double-edged, head-turning sword, but Anna Maria never bragged about herself, only about her teams and teammates. She had an unequaled drive and determination to succeed for her school; but she was also grounded, modest and decent — especially to the little girls who would ask for her autograph. Yes. It happened.

Anecdote: In the spring of her senior year in 1978, I wrote an extensive biography of her and her high school accomplishments. I wrote that she was "the standard by which all future athletes will be measured." My editor thought that was a little excessive; he was probably right.

But in the end, I was right. She has remained almost unmatched. Which is why I am delighted to participate in anything that will bring honor and recognition to Anna Maria Lopez.

Thank you.

Norm Maves Jr.
The Oregonian, 1965-2007

Support Data

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Lopez sets standards for girls basketball players

By NORM MAVES JR.
of The Oregonian staff

Some day somebody is going to trace the history of high school girls basketball in Oregon.

When that happens, that historian will stop at Anna Maria Lopez and probably declare her playing career the turning point in the game in this state.

That person might be Kathy Kinyon, Lopez' coach at St. Mary's Academy for the past three years.

"I got an idea of how other people look at Anna Maria down at the state tournament," says Kinyon, whose team lost out to eventual state runnerup Hillsboro in the Metro League playoffs this year. "We walked into the arena, and kids were coming up to get an autograph or just to touch her. It was as if I had walked in with Bill Walton.

"I got the idea that some younger girls look at her as if she's more than just a person."

That's the way it has been on the court, too. The 6-foot-1 Blues center has yet to be seriously challenged on the basketball court. In more than one instance she was challenged with smothering, specifically designed zone defenses that collapsed whenever she got the ball on the high post.

In such cases, she was ready. She could score, of course, but she also could pass. Besides her 20.7 points and 17.7 rebounds per game in her senior year, she also handed out 10 assists a game.

One coach who recognized the inevitable was Lyle Fagnan of Crescent Valley, whose Raiders lost only one game all year — a pre-season contest to the Blues — on their way to the state championship.

"We have no single player who can stop her," he said after watching Lopez hit 10 of 13 field goals and 12 of 16 free throws for 32 points. "Physically, she is the best high school girl basketball player I've ever seen."

Quite naturally, Lopez has been able to control other sports as well. The scholarship she signed last week to go to the University of Southern California was half for basketball and half for volleyball. She won the state discus title last year and should do it again this year.

All of this has little effect on Lopez, who has been an athlete ever since her father, Alonzo, put up a hoop in the Lopez' Northeast Portland home when she was in the fourth grade.

"I did a lot of athletic things with my brother Tim," she said last week. "We were only a year apart in age and went everywhere together.

"When we would play basketball and softball with with the other kids in the neighborhood, he'd always refer to me as 'my tomboy little sister.' I didn't like it at all."

From birth (eight pounds, 23 inches), Anna Maria Lopez has been big for her age.

"Mom would buy clothes for my sister Terry and I," she said. "Terry is three years older than I am, but the clothes were the same size. People would look at Terry then ask me how old I was — I'd say 'four' and they wouldn't believe me."

Being big has never created any mental barriers for Lopez to overcome. She always liked the idea of being the biggest girl in the school.

"I've never been self-conscious about it," she said. "I knew girls who were tall when I was growing up, and some of them would slouch or bend at the knees or just be embarassed about it.

"It never even occurred to me that being big was bad."

All of the Lopez children — there are eight in all, Anna Maria being the third oldest — have gone to Catholic schools. There was a time when Anna Maria might have gone to St. Mary's of the Valley of Beaverton instead of St. Mary's Academy.

"Terry started out at Marycrest High," she said. "But that school closed before she was through, and she transferred to St. Mary's of the Valley.

"Everybody assumed that I would go there, too. But Terry (an undergraduate student at the University of San Francisco) had to get up at 5:30 and 6:00 in the morning to catch a 7:00 bus, and I didn't like that idea at all. So I went to St. Mary's instead."



Staff photo by DAVID FALCONER

OREGON'S BEST — Anna Maria Lopez, three-sport star for St. Mary's Academy in Portland, jogs along hills above downtown Portland. Her performances in all sports, but particularly on basketball court for past four years, have established of excellence against which future players will be judged.

As a freshman, she fit into a Blues basketball team that was already loaded with talent. Sally Blickle, who later played at Oregon, was there along with Mo Clifford (now at the University of Portland), Tracy Graham and Jeannie Ray (University of San Francisco).

"A lot of people thought, 'Here comes the rookie star,' " she said. "But they didn't know that I was just as scared as any other freshman."

The accomplishments have piled up since. She led the Blues to volleyball championships in 1976 and 1977 and was an all-tournament selection for three straight years. With Clifford, she led the Blues to a winning streak in basketball that ran the length of the 1976-77 season until Wilson, with Pam Mollett and Wendy Peterson, beat them in the state finals at Lewis and Clark.

The scouts from budding women's college programs were interested, but a quirk in the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women rules prevented them from making the first contact with her.

Three things entered into her selection process.

"I wanted to go where the competition was good," she said. "I wanted a good academic school, and I wanted to get out of the state."

She wrote to 14 schools in all, including Marquette of Milwaukee and Immaculata of Immaculata, Pa., the prototype of a successful women's college program in the early 1970s.

She finally settled on USC, ignoring, strangely, the 1978 national champion across town at UCLA.

"UCLA recruited mostly from instate," she said, "and didn't seem all that interested. USC was."

She went to Los Angeles during the Easter weekend, and it didn't hurt that the sun was shining.

"I could just picture myself at the beach down there," she said. "The weather was beautiful, and the opportunity seemed right."

At USC, she will be expected to move right in at her old high school position, high post.

"We're hoping that she can be our starter," said USC assistant Coach Jean Agee. "We have a 6-6 girl, Lisa Widding, who is not very mobile. We hope that Anna Maria can move right in."

All the Trojans recruited Lopez on was a film strip Kinyon sent to Los Angeles. "We couldn't have her try out," she said. "But by every indication she has all of the physical tools to do very well. She is very strong and moves well."

Kinyon believes that her departing center has set a standard by which a lot of future athletes will be judged.

"I already have coaches who ask me for Anna Maria's statistics over the four years," she said. "They want to compare their own girls to her."

In short, Anna Maria Lopez seems to have done for girls basketball in Oregon what Sheridan's Joni Huntley did for track and field in the early 1970s.

And the history books will probably say as much.

The Oregonian **PREPS**

Honor roll

Armstrong to go far in long-distance races

Even if Oregon State School for the Deaf distance runner Brian Armstrong were able to hear footsteps behind him, he's usually too far in front of the field for it to make any difference.

Armstrong scored a solid distance double at the Kennedy Invitational in Mt. Angel last weekend that threatens to rank him at the top of the nation's deaf students. He's already tops among the Class A runners in Oregon.

Armstrong, a senior, ran 1,500 meters in 4:13 and the 3,000 in 9:16.1. That converts to a 4:30 mile and a 9:54.1 two-mile; last year, Armstrong ran a 4:25.3 mile and a 9:49.2 two-mile.

Surprisingly, neither one of those times was worth a state championship. McKenzie's Scott Spruil beat him in the state two-mile and Lutheran's Kregg Einspahr topped him in the mile.

OSSD Coach Jack McLennan has big plans for his distance star, who comes from Sweet Home.

"We're going for a 3:55 in the 1,500 and we'd like to go into the 8s (minutes) in the 3,000," said McLennan. "Brian is already going at a pretty good pace. I suppose if he hits 3:55 in the 1,500 next week, we'll aim for 3:40 at the end of the year."

The only problem Armstrong has, pace time right now. He's a real good worker, and he wants to do well."

At this pace, it's entirely possible.

TERI WIERSON, Sunset — Last year's hurdles and 880 state champion already has surpassed her best of last season. Against Parkrose on Friday, Wierson, a senior, ran 800 meters in 2:09.6. That was almost two seconds better than her best 880 time last season of 2:11.5.

BOB LYSAKER, Newberg — Tiger senior right-hander tossed a no-hitter in a 7-0 victory over Molalla.

ROURKE LOWE, Aloha — The state champion in both high hurdles (twice) and intermediate hurdles defied cold weather at Beaverton Thursday to tick off two superb sprint and hurdle times.

Lowe sped to a 100-yard dash win in 9.7 seconds, the best mark in the state this year, and notched a 14.1 mark in the 120-yard high hurdles. The latter mark tied his season best of last season.

BRIAN SMITH, Jesuit — The Crusader junior right-hander has given Jesuit some pitching proficiency after missing his sophomore year. Smith threw a one-hitter in a 5-0 victory over Astoria to raise his season record to 3-0.

Prep patter

Medford's Roelandt inspires legends

By NORM MAVES JR.
of The Oregonian staff

Let's see now. By our reckoning, Frank Roelandt should be about 250 years old and has been the head basketball coach at Medford High School for the past 230.

By now, he probably has won 10,000 games and lost around six, and gone to the Oregon Class AAA tournament the past 60 years. He must have coached Dr. James Naismith, Joe Lapchik, Dutch Dehnert, George Mikan, Al McGuire, Frank McGuire, John Wooden and Bill Russell.



Maybe it only seems that way. It's just that when a basketball coach stays at one place

"We came up two minutes later with the stroller. I'll never forget the look on his face. He said, 'I wish I could hide under a log.' "

Anderson also remembers an incident the same year involving Medford center Lowell Dean, who would later become an All-Coast tackle at Oregon.

"Lowell always had a habit of misplacing things. That year it was contact lenses — he must have gone through about 15 pair. We had the manager carry a spare set.

"One game Lowell starts out by throwing the ball away twice, so Frank calls time out and asks him if everything is all right," he continued. "Then we went back on the court and Lowell throws it away about four more times.

"Finally, Frank calls time out again. He looks at Lowell and says, 'You forgot your contact lenses again, didn't you Lowell?' "

CAL DEAN — Dean was a reserve guard on that 1960 team, but his best sport was baseball, in which if we could have won the title again in 1961," he said. "We were playing Klamath Falls, and I missed a layup with 10 seconds to go which would have tied the game (Medford lost, 66-64).

"In the locker room, he never even mentioned it. That showed me a lot of class."

The stories go on and on, but probably the best way to put 29 years of Frank Roelandt behind us is to say that it can't be done.

Now all that needs to be done is for the state tournament people to figure out a way to start up next March without him.

meier & frank
TIRE & SERVICE

ANNA MARIA LOPEZ – SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION TO SPORTS

By OhofAdmin December 5, 2018



The face of St. Mary's Academy athletics from her playing days to her current job as athletic director, Anna Maria Lopez (b. Feb 19, 1960) is as distinguished as a role model as she was a competitor.

Between 1974 and 1978, Lopez was the dominant female prep athlete in the state, some might say dominant athlete period. A four-sport athlete for St. Mary's Blues, Anna Maria's season never seemed to end. She led the volleyball team to a pair of state championships, winning three all-state honors. Basketball yielded two all-state awards. On the softball diamond, Lopez became an ASA all-American. And she still had time to win the state discus championship…. Twice. Not surprisingly, she was named Oregon Prep Athlete of the Year as a senior.

At the University of Southern California, Anna Maria settled for two sports. A 4-year letter winner in volleyball, she was part of two National Championship teams. Lopez also lettered three years in basketball. Volleyball was her ticket to a professional career, Lopez was an all-star of Major League Volleyball.

Coaching was next as the prodigal daughter returned to Saint Mary's in 1984. Anna Maria was just as successful in that venture, honored as state coach of the year for volleyball and track and field.

After receiving her masters degree from Portland State, Lopez added athletic director to her resume and, yes, she would also be honored as Oregon's top athletic director in 2001.


Anna Maria Lopez
St. Mary's Academy '78
5 Total All-State Awards
2 Time Volleyball State Champion
2 Time Volleyball National
Champion at USC

USC Athletics



Anna Maria Lopez Inducted Into Oregon Sports Hall Of Fame
Women's Volleyball
Posted: August 11, 2009

Aug. 11, 2009

LOS ANGELES -- Former USC women's volleyball player Anna Maria Lopez (1978-81) will be inducted next month into the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame. The Portland, Ore., native was a member of USC's 1980 and 1981 national championship squads, earning All-WCAA second team honors during her 1980 campaign.

She was a two-sport athlete at Troy as she also played on the women's basketball team. She earned the David X. Marks Scholar-Athlete Award as well as the CALIB Women's Collegiate Athlete of the Year.

Lopez competed for the United States at the 1980 World University Games in Romania and later played professionally in Major League Volleyball. She began teaching at her high school alma mater of St. Mary's Academy in Portland in 1985 and later named athletic director in 1991 where she continues her role to this day.

She is in the USC program's top 10 all-time list for individual solo blocks in a match (tied for second with seven against Cal State Fullerton, 10/6/80 and tied for fifth with six vs. Cal Poly, 10/30/81). She is tied for third for individual block assists (17), set against Long Beach State on Oct. 14, 1979. Her 43 solo blocks in 1981 place her in a tie for third on USC's all-time list.

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SPORTS

Title IX, 40 years later: Anna Maria Lopez, in her words

Updated: Jun. 18, 2012, 11:00 a.m. | Published: Jun. 18, 2012, 10:00 a.m.



By Lindsay Schnell | The Oregonian/OregonLive

Bruce Ely/The Oregonian

Anna Maria Lopez

| Now 52, and in her 21st year as St. Mary's athletic director, she is arguably the best female high school athlete in Oregon history.

---

40 years after Title IX: In their words

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance ...

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Though the opening lines of Title IX make no mention of sports, one of the landmark legislation's greatest legacies is found on playing fields across the nation. This week, in commemoration of the law's enactment on June 23, 1972, The Oregonian presents a series of as-told-to pieces written from reporter Lindsay Schnell's interviews with key figures in Oregon sports through the ensuing decades.

Join the discussion and share the stories of Title IX's impact in your life in the comments below, or

email us

.

Sunday:

Teri Mariani

, Portland State

Monday:

Anna Maria Lopez, St. Mary's Academy

Tuesday:

Brad Smith, Oregon City High School

Wednesday:

Megan Rapinoe, University of Portland

Thursday:

Advertisement

Jaime Nared, Westview High School

"Wow, just one chromosome different and look at what he gets to do."

That's what I thought the first time I heard how much money

Danny Ainge

was making in the NBA.

I grew up in the same era as Danny; I was at

St. Mary's

when he was at

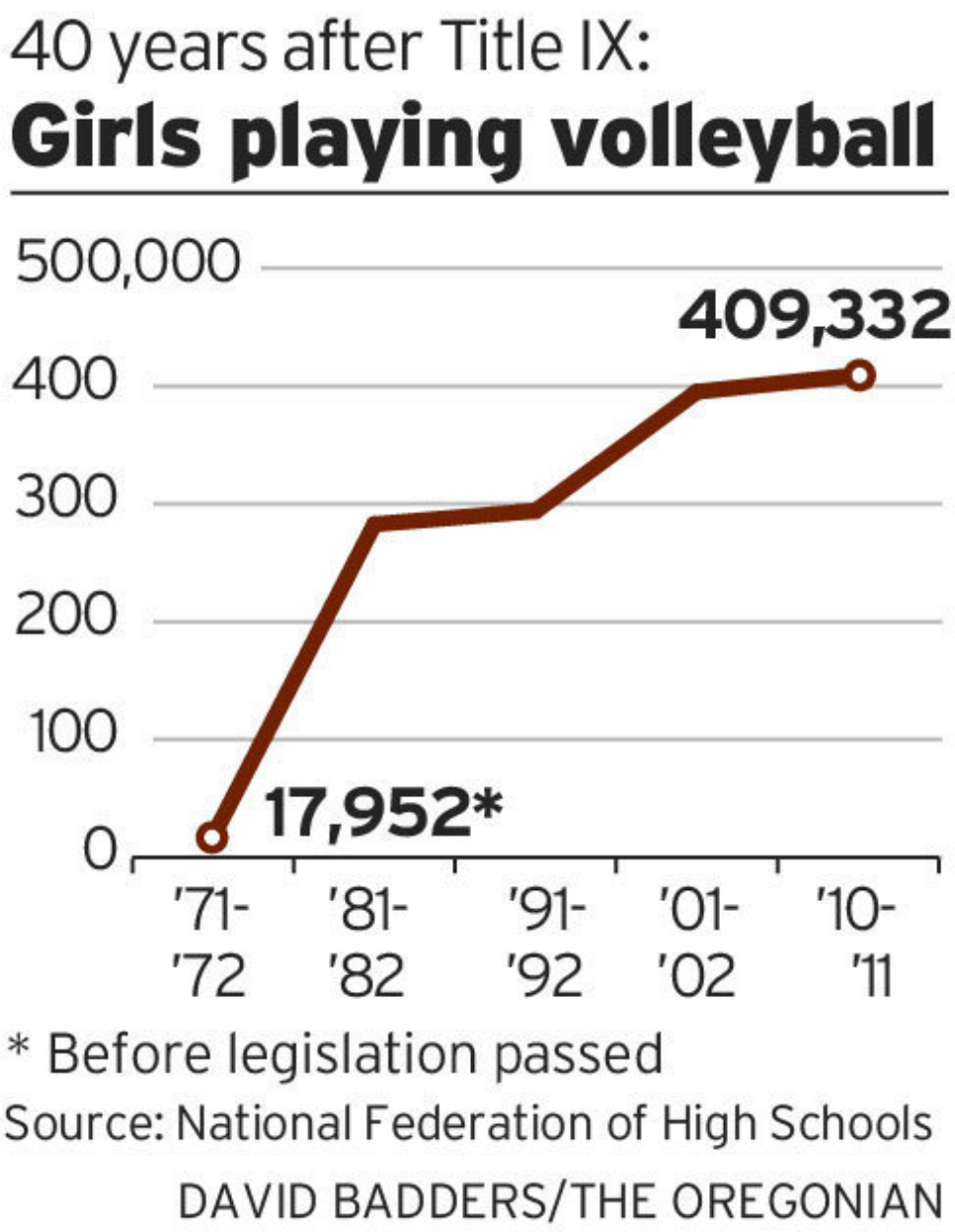
North Eugene

. He might be the best high school athlete in Oregon history. Obviously a lot factors into someone becoming a professional athlete, but I remember thinking, "Hey, I was a three-sport athlete, too, just like him."

The difference: He was off making tons of money playing basketball; I was riding my bike to St. Mary's to coach volleyball, basketball and track.

In the fall of 1981, I was part of the USC team that won the first NCAA women's volleyball national championship. It was so cool. At USC all athletes -- male and female -- were treated well. But when I left USC I got a wakeup call.

Advertisement



View full size

I wanted to get back to Oregon, and I was talking to Oregon State about an assistant volleyball coaching position. They told me they could pay only $4,000, but that they could get me a waitressing job, too. Well, I did not graduate from USC to be a waitress.

Advertisement

Instead I went to work at Oregon but even there I was shocked at how female athletes there were treated. They had no practice gear, just these chewed up, ratty gym clothes. We didn't have regular gym times and we had to drive to all of our tournaments. To be honest, I felt like I had it better in high school.

And so eventually I went back.

All these years later, I realize that I came along at the right place, the right time and with the right people. At St. Mary's, the nuns always championed girls being involved in sports. I'm the third of eight kids, and I followed my older brother everywhere. I never thought I couldn't do something because I was a girl. I never thought I was just a tagalong. There were obstacles, though.

I threw the shot and discus in high school and, if we needed points in a meet, I would long jump. I didn't have track spikes, but my brother did. My feet were a little bigger than his, but I could squish into his shoes if needed. Nowadays, that wouldn't happen. If we had a female athlete who needed equipment, we would find a way to get it for her.

I returned because this place means a lot to me. I wanted to make sure that my younger sisters, and now my nieces, had the same opportunities I did. Sometimes as women, we're bad at tooting our own horn. But people have to realize that young women have just as much to offer as young men, and it's critical they're given the chance to prove that.

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NGRATULATIONS

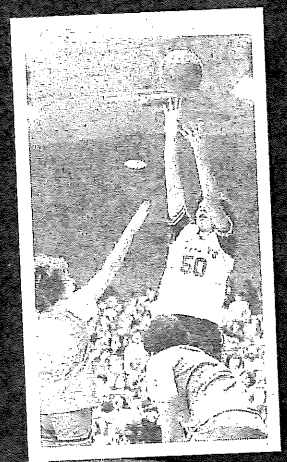
TO ST. MARY'S ACADEMY LEGEND

ANNA MARIA LOPEZ

NG HONORED WITH THE GAME CHANGER AWARD AT THE 2016 OREGON SPORTS AWARDS!



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- Oregon High School State Champion Athlete
- NCAA National Champion Athlete
- 31 Years at St. Mary's Academy as a Teacher, Coach and Athletic Director, Leading One of Oregon's Premier High School Athletic Programs
- Lifelong Advocate for Girls and Women's Sports in Oregon and Beyond



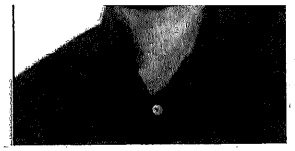






RY'S
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First Team All PAC-12 Defense, helping lead the Beavers into the NCAA Tournament for the first time in 26 years.

most awarded track and field athletes, a four-time NCAA shot put champion, an eight-time Big 12 Conference shot put champion, a nine-time All-American and a two-time nominee for Big 12 Athlete of the Year. He won the 2015 NCAA Indoor Championship with a throw of 69-9.75, and set a collegiate record at the Big 12 Championships with a toss of 71-3.50.

Defensive Player of the Year, First Team USA Today and a member of numerous other All-American squads. The powerful defensive end, who compiled 45 tackles for a loss, 10.5 sacks, 16 quarterback hits, 39 hurries and 46 total stops, was drafted in the first round by the NFL's San Francisco 49ers.

Potential NFHS HOF when Summer Meeting in PDX?

LOU BURGE SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

This award goes to the outstanding Special Olympics athlete of the year for 2015-2016.



WINNER
Henry Meece
Special Olympics Oregon

He was born in Korea and suffered a birth trauma. Henry was adopted by Americans Nancy and Ted Meece at the age of 6 months, and has wanted to return to meet Korean people and experience the culture, as well as display his athletic prowess on the world stage. His opportunity came where he represented the United States as a Special Olympics snowboard athlete at the Special Olympics World Winter Games 2013 in Pyeongchang, Korea.

Henry was extremely active when he was young and would spend hours mastering skateboarding skills. From there he moved on to skating, skiing, and snowboarding. Henry is an advanced snowboarder and loves hitting the slopes. In addition to snowboarding, Henry competes in Special Olympics Oregon swimming events. Henry had many academic and sensory challenges in his childhood but always loved the structure of school, his teachers, and the social aspect of the learning community. He also has two paying jobs.

Henry earned a gold medal at X Games Aspen 2015 in the first ever Unified Sports Dual Slalom with unified partner Chris Klug (an Olympic bronze medalist). Henry and Chris returned to X-Games Aspen 2016 and defended their title by again taking home the gold medal.

GAME CHANGER: DEDICATION TO PREP SPORTS

This award recognizes individuals who have dedicated their lives to high school sports.



WINNER
Anna Maria Lopez
St. Mary's Academy

Anna Maria Lopez has served as athletic director at St. Mary's Academy, Portland, OR since 1991. She began her career at her alma mater (Class of '78) as an assistant basketball coach in 1984, and in the following year, she joined the faculty as a health and physical education teacher. During her 32 years working at St. Mary's she coached volleyball for 13 years (head coach 1995-2001 & 2005); track for 2 years (1985-87), and basketball (1984-86). She was honored as the Metro League Volleyball Coach of the Year in '95, '97, and '99, and was also named the Oregon High School Volleyball Coach of the Year in 1995. 1994, Anna also served a stint as assistant volleyball coach at the University of Portland. In 2003 she was awarded in St. Mary's Academy's Academy Awards.

Prior to St. Mary's, Anna Maria taught physical education while also coaching volleyball and track at Lakeridge High School (1984-85). She was a substitute teacher during the 1983-84 school year at West Linn (among others) where she also coached volleyball, basketball and track. Upon returning to Oregon after college, Anna Maria was an assistant volleyball coach and instructor at the University of Oregon (1982).

Anna Maria's athletic career started in CYO at the Madeleine school competing in volleyball, basketball, swimming, track and softball. She prepped at St. Mary's Academy in Portland, she helped her volleyball team to a state title, was an All-State basketball player, and a state champion discus thrower. Collegiately, she attended the University of Southern California on a full ride in volleyball and basketball; she played on 2 national championship volleyball teams; the last Association for Women Intercollegiate Athletics (AIAW) championship, as well as the first National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) women's volleyball championship in 1981 (beating UCLA in 5 sets at Pauley Pavilion). She also played basketball in the US Jr. Olympic Sports Festival in 1979 and then volleyball for the USA in the World University Games held in Bucharest, Romania 1981.

OSAAtoday News / Coaches Polls / Stories

PACIFIC OFFICE AUTOMATION

Centennial Stories: The evolution of volleyball in Oregon

The sport looks a lot different than when the first OSAA state tournament was conducted in 1974

November 3, 2018 by John Tawa, OSAAtoday



In the 1970s, attacking from the middle of the court was popular and blocks were not imposing

Anna Maria Lopez was a freshman at St. Mary's Academy when she played in her first OSAA state tournament in 1974, held at Portland State University. It also happened to be the first state volleyball tournament ever run by the Oregon School Activities Association. Churchill defeated Clackamas for the AAA title, 15-3, 15-7. St. Mary's placed third.

"You walk in and it's this huge gym and there are lots of other teams," said Lopez. "I had no idea."

Later today, for the 45th consecutive year, the OSAA will crown state volleyball champions, now in six classifications in tournaments held at three separate locations around the state. Successful teams will serve tantalizing jump floats, block at the net with impunity, hit unstoppable slides behind the setter and look to their liberos to lead the defense.

It's safe to say the game has evolved over the past 45 years…

Lopez, who stands 6-2, was a four-year star for the Blues and was part of two state-championship teams. She went on to play at USC and was part of national championship teams in 1980 and 1981. She returned to St. Mary's as a teacher and coach in 1985 and has served as the school's athletic director for the past 29 years. She has seen the sport change from a front-row seat.

In 1974, teams only scored points on their own serve rather than the rally scoring of today where a point is awarded on every serve. Players served only from right back and there were no top-spin jump serves or jump floats. The serve was not seen as a weapon to score points or put pressure on the defense but rather as a means of starting a rally. If you hit the net on serve and the ball trickled over, that was a side out for the other team not a point for you.

Serves that made it over the net were passed, not by defensive specialists or dedicated defenders, called "liberos," who became part of the game in 2006, but by the players in the back row at the time. If they had to go to the ground to attempt a dig, players dove for the ball; they did not roll like they do today.

Players rotated and played all the way around. When in the back row, they passed and dug. In the front row, they hit. Uniforms were t-shirts and shorts. It was a simpler time.

"We didn't have specific positions," said Lopez. "And we didn't really run plays. The game has become a lot more refined."

"It was basic volleyball," said Carl Neuberger, an Oregon coaching legend and former head coach at Portland State who recently retired after serving as head coach at West Linn for 17 years. "Set it outside or a high ball in the middle. Rarely back set.

"If you had a player like Anna Maria you would set her every ball."

Setters set from the ground. Jump setting was virtually non-existent except as an effort to save a pass that was too high. More sophisticated teams would try to run tempo with short sets to the middle and shoot sets to the left side, but most of the time the set was high and slow. Throw it up into the rafters and let your big hitter go get it. If she was in the back row, set her there. Attacks off of one foot, especially slides where players run to the right behind the setter, were rarer than rare. So, too, was the block on the other side of the net. It wasn't well-formed or coordinated and would-be blockers had not yet perfected the technique of pressing over the net to stop an attack. The best, most athletic hitters dominated in the 70s because there were few hands in their way.

Every team had good athletes but there weren't as many good coaches.

"If you had good athletes and were a good coach you could make hay because it wasn't as competitive," Neuberger said. "Athletes with polish always beat athletes without."

In the 1980s, as club volleyball began to grow in popularity, the quality of volleyball being played in Oregon went up a notch.

"More athletes began specializing in one sport," noted Central Catholic head coach Rick Lorenz, the winningest coach in state history.

"We played every sport that came along back in the day," said Lopez, who also played basketball at USC. "Volleyball is like golf; it's a game of precision. The more you practice the better off you're going to be. Players today have better skills because they play year round."

"The ball control is better now because of the amount of volleyball the athletes are playing," added Melanie Hambelton, the longtime head coach at Concordia University who starred for Estacada in the 70s. "The athletes are bigger, too, so there's a lot more power within the game."

“The biggest change for me over the years has been the growth in parity among teams,” noted Lorenz, whose Ram team was upset in the 6A quarterfinals yesterday afternoon. “There used to be 3-4 teams that could win it all. Now there might be six or seven.”

“There are so many more athletes playing volleyball year round so it's much more competitive statewide,” added Hambleton. “When I played at Estacada I was playing year round because we had a great club program called the LOCOS and we traveled everywhere to play a lot of volleyball. There weren't a lot of high school athletes doing that so we had a definite advantage.”

“There were always athletes but the number and quality have improved because of out-of-season opportunities that help them develop,” Neuberger said. “Overall the game is better because the depth is better.”

This evening in 6A, Jesuit, the only nationally-ranked team in Oregon, will try to win its fourth state title since 2012. The Crusaders field a roster with six players standing six-feet tall or taller. All play but a few play club volleyball. None plays basketball for Jesuit or any other winter sport.

Volleyball has changed since that first OSAA state tournament in 1974. The rules are different, the strategies more sophisticated, the benches deeper with athletes specializing in the sport.

One thing that hasn’t changed, however, is the love of the game. It has been one constant for at least the past 45 years.

“I loved my time playing volleyball back in the 70s and I'm grateful for the opportunities in life that volleyball has given me,” said Hambelton. “I was able to get a college degree because of this sport and I'm still involved in this game that I love. It's hard to believe it's been a part of my life for 44 years!”



John Tawa

Staff Writer
OSAAtoday

johnt@osaa.org
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DATE	TIME	TYPE	SUBJECT	SOCIAL MESSAGE
New Mexico				
07/12/21	1 PM	Push to Post	Title IX at 50	NFHS #TitleIXat50: Celebrating the inspirational individuals and landmark moments in the history of Title IX, and continuing to grow the educational and competitive opportunities for the future.
07/13/21	9 AM	Trailblazer	Linda Estes	Linda Estes helped make it acceptable for women to be in high school & college athletics. Her contributions opened the door for young girls to pursue athletic scholarships. Estes' work also paved the way for women's athletics at the University of New Mexico. #TitleIXat50
07/14/21				
07/15/21	9 AM	Moment of Magnitude	Terri Abraham	The Title IX journey in New Mexico took a major leap in 2002. That year, Terri Abraham became the first female to officiate baseball & football state championship games. In 2007, she & Lilly Hill became the first female duo to officiate a football state championship. #TitleIXat50
07/16/21				
South Dakota				
07/19/21	1 PM	Push to Post	National Influence	South Dakota was the first state to use a 28.5" bball for girls, & the libero & rally scoring for VB. These advances are now common nationally & started under the oversight of Ruth Rehn, the first @SDHSAA executive to oversee girls sports. #TitleIXat50
07/20/21	9 AM	Trailblazer	Jo Auch	Jo Auch was among the first 3-sport female athletes in South Dakota & the first female scholarship athletes at University of South Dakota. She spent nearly 40 years in education, coaching & officiating, including the past 12 as asst. exec. director for the SDHSAA. #TitleIXat50
07/21/21				
07/22/21	9 AM	Moment of Magnitude	Ruth Rehn	Ruth Rehn was hired in 1974 as the first SDHSAA executive to oversee girls sports. In her nearly 40-year career, she led South Dakota to adding BB, VB, XC, & cheer/dance. She was also influential in enhancing girls' championships in T/F, gymnastics, golf & tennis. #TitleIXat50
07/23/21				

Illinois

11/01/21	1 PM	Push to Post	Jackie Joyner-Kersee	A 🏀, 🏐 & T&F star at Lincoln HS in East St. Louis, Illinois, @JJoynerKersee was a member of 4 @IHSA_IL state title teams — 1 in 🏀 & 3 in T&F. She also won 2 Olympic 🥉 medals in the heptathlon & another 🥉 in the long jump at the 1988 Summer Games. #TitleIXat50
11/02/21	9 AM	Trailblazer	Ola Bundy	The "First Lady of America's Girls Interscholastic Athletics," Ola Bundy was the 1st state association female administrator when she joined the @IHSA_IL in 1967. In her storied 30-year career, she helped write the IL State Board of Ed. (@ISBEnews) Sex Equity Rules. #TitleIXat50
11/03/21				
11/04/21	9 AM	Moment of Magnitude	Girls Bowling	Following the passage of Title IX, the @IHSA_IL sanctioned its first girls bowling season in 1972-73 with Abingdon HS crowned the inaugural champion. Abingdon defeated Schaumburg HS, 1,584-1,521. #TitleIXat50 Two seasons later, controversy struck when the Dixon HS team – featuring four male bowlers – defeated the all-female Forest View team, 9,749-9,520. The raucous 300 attendees made their disdain well known, showing mild support for the newly crowned male champions. #TitleIXat50 Bill Leighty, the then Peoria Journal Star (@pjstar) assistant sports editor, wrote, "Dixon may be one of the most unpopular champions in the history of IHSA athletics, accepting its awards amid light and scattered applause…" #TitleIXat50 Leighty continued, "But then perhaps the gallery wore itself down applauding when Forest View's all-girl team accepted the runner-up trophy." #TitleIXat50 Consequently, the IHSA passed a resolution in 1975 that drew concrete lines between boys tournaments & girls tournaments. In years since, those rules have been altered & strengthened by state & federal assistance that helped protect female athletic opportunities. #TitleIXat50
11/05/21				

Oregon

11/08/21	1 PM	Push to Post	Joni Huntley	Olympic T/F star Joni Huntley reached new heights at Sheridan (OR) HS, winning 6 @OSAASports titles from 1972-74 & setting a U.S. record by clearing 6 feet as a senior. She also won titles in the 100-yard dash & 100m high hurdles in 1974. #TitleIXat50
11/09/21	9 AM	Trailblazer	Anna Maria Lopez	From 1974-78, Anna Maria Lopez dominated Oregon prep sports. At St. Mary's Academy in Portland, she won 2 @OSAASports discus titles, led the 🏐 team to 2 more, & received 5 all-state honors in 🏀 & 🏐, a @USASoftball All-America nod & Oregon Prep Athlete of the Year. #TitleIXat50
11/10/21				
11/11/21	9 AM	Moment of Magnitude	First Individual/Team Championships	Portland's @LHSCards own a pair of landmark firsts for Oregon girls sports. In 1946, Wilma Tanner won Oregon's first girls championship with her @OSAASports girls tennis singles title. The swim team followed suit by winning the first-ever team title in 1948. #TitleIXat50
11/12/21				



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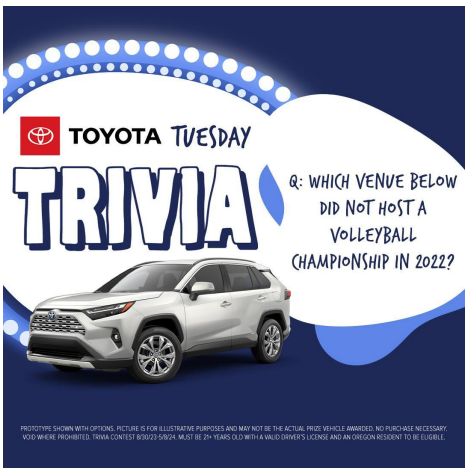
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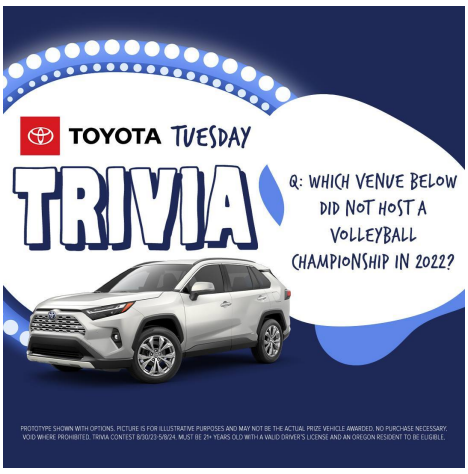
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At some point, girls today will come to appreciate

Title IX

just like I did. Eventually these girls are going to be mothers, and they're going to expect that their daughters be given at least the same opportunities they had.

Maybe they'll even expect more.

-- As told to

Lindsay Schnell



View full size

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St. Mary's Academy
June 8, 2022 ·

Congratulations to our Athletics Director, Anna Maria Lopez '78 who is featured in this month's Winged M magazine where she talks about the impact and legacy of Title IX, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this month! #smapdx https://issuu.com/thewingedm/docs/jun22_wingedm/58

ATHLETICS



As Title IX Turns 50, an Accomplished Athlete Looks Back, and Ahead

By Laurie Harquail

K.t. Emerson and 356 others 54 comments 11 shares

Like Comment Share

Most relevant

Write a comment...

Eve Donnelly
"If you treat people like champions, you get champions." 🤜🤛



Like Reply 1y 2

Amy Nicole McCammond
THE BEST 💙

Like Reply 1y 3

Gary Sparks
How wonderful! I was in my 9th year as a school principal when this all took place. Budgets were amazingly revised and revolutionized. Just as it should be!!! Praise God!

Like Reply 1y

Top fan
Brittney Clark
SMA alum Susie Niedermeyer is also featured in this article.

Like Reply 1y

Brenda Currie
We love you Anna Maria Lopez - you have inspired us all for so many years - you are a natural born leader !!!🙏❤️💪

Like Reply 1y

Annie Auxier
Awesome. Congratulations #50. Well done teammate.

Like Reply 1y

Gloria Hunt
Wow she does not age! Congratulations, Anna Maria!

Like Reply 1y

Casey Lehner
So great....CONGRATULATIONs
🥰❤️💐

Like Reply 1y

Tony Ashton
Well Deserved recognition; much appreciated at SMA!

Like Reply 1y Edited

Ellen Moran Wood
Anna Maria it is just amazing what you have done for women's sports.



Top fan
Colleen Rennie Faherty
Way to go Anna Maria!!🎉🌞🌞👌
Like Reply 1y



Stephanie Granvall
Congratulations!!
Like Reply 1y



C.c. Benitez
Congrats, Anna Maria! Well deserved!!!!
Like Reply 1y



Katherine Doherty
Congrats!
Like Reply 1y



Karen E Thompson
Congratulations, Anna Maria! 👏
Like Reply 1y



Maureen Atchison
Your shot still looks great Ace!! Nice article and I cannot say enough about what you have contributed to girls athletics as a player, coach, athletic director and administrator-THANK YOU!! And thank you also for being a great teammate!!!
Like Reply 1y Edited 2



Lori Criswell Godfrey
What an honor! Congrats!
Like Reply 1y



Soraya Meza Corrales
Congratulations Anna Maria 👏🏻👏🏻
Like Reply 1y



Amie Grunwald Lenzi
Congrats!!🥳🎉
Like Reply 1y



Dawn Nelson
I read the article in The Winged M. You have had a wonderful athletic & coaching career.
Like Reply 1y



Denise Matthews
Congratulations Anna Maria! 🎉🎺🎉🎉
Like Reply 1y



Lori Aplanalp Sheridan



Debbie Jensen
Very cool - I remember her!!

Like Reply 1y

↳ 2 Replies



Kelley Neely Rifilato
Anna Maria Lopez, you are have always led by example! Congratulations for all that you have accomplished in your life.

Like Reply 1y



Susan Amato Castagna
Congratulations, Anna Maria! During 7th and 8th grade I played basketball when we could only dribble three times before being required to pass the ball. When asked why, I was told the adults didn't want us to sweat. "Horses sweat, men perspire, women ... **See more**

Like Reply 1y



Mollyanne Sherman
Congratulations Anna Maria 🎉

Like Reply 1y



Maureen Walker
CONGRATULATIONS!! GOD BLESS YOU !

Like Reply 1y



Tara Steen Thomas
Congratulations Anna Maria!!!

Like Reply 1y



Denise Johnson
Congratulations Anna Maria.

Like Reply 1y



Anni Kaiel Betzler
Congratulations Anna Maria!!

Like Reply 1y



Cynthia Perry Rupp
Congratulations 🎉

Like Reply 1y



Christina Sliwa
Congratulations Anna Maria!🅾️!!!

Like Reply 1y



Maille O'Brien-Tao
Congratulations Anna Maria!!

Carol Dopp
Congratulations!
Like Reply 1y

Cindy Campbell
Congrats!!🎉🎺🎊
Like Reply 1y

Aleshia Morse
Congratulations!!
Like Reply 1y

Lisa Irene Brown
Congratulations.
Like Reply 1y

Top fan
Joan Niggemeyer
Hats off to you, Anna Maria! 🥳🎺🙏
Like Reply 1y

Deidre King
Congratulations!
Like Reply 1y

Michelle Mitchell
Congrats! Still a superstar!!
Like Reply 1y

Eleanore Amato Baccellieri
Congratulations Anna Maria!! 🏀
Like Reply 1y

Kristina Tellado-bryant
Congratulations Anna Maria!



Like Reply 1y

Sarah Goodwin

Like Reply 1y

Jessherrie Hudson



Like Reply 1y

Top fan

Sheila O'Connell



Like Reply 1y

Most Relevant is selected, so some comments may have been filtered out.

ANNA MARIA LOPEZ

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATOR

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ST. MARY'S ACADEMY — **1991 – Present**
Portland, OR
Athletic Director — **1991 – Present**
Physical Education & Health Teacher — 1985 - 1991
Volleyball Coach — 1995-2001, 2005 & 2017
Track Coach — 1986 - 87
Basketball Coach — 1984 – 86

LAKERIDGE HIGH SCHOOL — 1984 - 85
Lake Oswego, OR
Physical Education Teacher/Volleyball & Track Coach

NORTH CLACKAMAS SD/OREGON TRAIL SD/PORTLAND PUBLIC SD — 1983 – 84
Clackamas, Oregon City and Portland, OR
Substitute Teacher – all levels and subjects

WEST LINN HIGH SCHOOL — 3/1983 – 84
West Linn, OR
Student Teacher/Substitute Teacher/Volleyball, Basketball & Track Coach

District and State Committees:

- Oregon Schools Activities Association (OSAA) Executive Board Member — 2023 – Present
- Oregon Women Sports Leadership (OWSLN) Steering Committee Member — 2001 - Present
- OSAA Official's Fee Review Committee — 2014-15 & 2022-23
- OSAA State Championship Review Committee — 2005 - 06
- Oregon Athletic Directors Association (OADA) Executive Board Member — 2020 - Present
- OADA League Representative (Metro/Mt. Hood/Three Rivers League) — 2000 – Present
- Interleague Council Member - Metro League & Mt. Hood Conference rep. — 2000 - 2015
- 5A/6A Nonleague Scheduling Committee Member & volleyball chair — 1993 – Present
- American Sport Education Program Instructor — 1998 – 2001
- Columbia Empire Volleyball Association (USA Volleyball) Board Member — 1990 - 99

Individual Awards and Recognition:

- National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) State Award of Merit — 2018
- Oregon Athletic Director Association 6A Athletic Director of the Year — 2017
- Three Rivers League Athletic Director of the Year — 2017
- Oregon Sports Awards Game Changer Award for Dedication to Prep Sports — 2015 - 16
- Mt. Hood Conference Athletic Director of the Year — 2007
- St. Mary's Academy Alumni Award, Outstanding Athletic Achievement — 2003
- Oregon Athletic Directors Association 4A Athletic Director of the Year — 2001
- Metro League Athletic Director of the Year — 2000 & 2001
- Oregon Athletic Coaches Association (OACA) 4A Female Coach of the Year — 2001
- Metro League Volleyball Coach of the Year — 1995, 1997 & 1999
- Oregonian 4A Volleyball Coach of the Year — 1995

ADDITIONAL COACHING EXPERIENCE

BLUES VOLLEYBALL CLUB 1984-2019
United States of America Volleyball (USAV), Columbia Empire Volleyball Association
Portland, Oregon
Blues Volleyball Club Board Member, Club Director, Coach

UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND 1994
Portland, OR
Women's Volleyball Assistant Coach

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON 1982
Eugene, OR
Women's Volleyball Assistant Coach/Physical Education Instructor

SUMMER CAMPS 1976 - 96
Portland, OR

- Ohio State University Volleyball Camp
- Portland State University Volleyball Camp
- Rick Lorenz/Blues Volleyball Camp
- University of Oregon Volleyball Camp
- University of Oregon Basketball Camp
- University of Portland Basketball Camp
- Maurice Lucas/City of Portland Youth Involvement Basketball Camps

ATHLETIC PLAYING BACKGROUND

Volleyball

- 1989 Nike World Masters, Portland, OR
- 5 seasons athletic volleyball member, Multnomah Athletic Club
- 2 seasons Major League Volleyball Player – Arizona Blaze & Portland Spikers
- 20 seasons USAV Women's Open volleyball player
- 1981 World University Games USA women's volleyball team – Bucharest, Romania
- 4-year Division I collegiate student-athlete (University of Southern California)
- 4-year high school varsity player (St. Mary's Academy)

Basketball

- 1979 United States Junior Olympic Sports Festival – West Team Member
- One of two first full scholarship basketball recipients at USC
- 2-year Division I collegiate student-athlete (University of Southern California)
- 4-year high school varsity player (St. Mary's Academy)

Track

- 3-year high school varsity track and field athlete (discus, shot put, long jump)

Softball

- 2 seasons women's fastpitch (there was no interscholastic softball offered at the time)

ATHLETIC HONORS & AWARDS

General/Academic:

- 2012 Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) Hall of fame Inductee
- 2009 Oregon Sports Hall of Fame (OSHOF) – Induction for Special Contribution to Sports
- 1989 Women's Sports Foundation Flo Hyman Award recipient
- 1981 University of Southern California David X. Marks Student-Athlete Award
- 1981 CALIB Latino Women's Collegiate Athlete of the Year (California Latino Broadcasters)
- 1979 Oregon Sports Awards Johnny Carpenter Prep Athlete of the Year (not gender specific)
- 1979 Bill Hayward Award finalist

Volleyball:

- 1998 Nike World Masters, Gold Medalist
- 5-time United States of America Volleyball (USAV) Women's Open Division All-American (1980, 1987, 1992, 1994, & 1998)
- 1989 Major League Volleyball All-Star
- 1987 USAV Runner-up
- 1981 NCAA DI Women's Volleyball National Champions – (inaugural NCAA women's championship)
- 1980 Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) DI National Volleyball Champions
- 1980 USAV Women's Open Division National Champions
- 1980 USAV All-Rookie Team selection
- 1979 & 1980 West Coast Athletic Association (WCAA) All-Conference Second Team
- 1976 & 1977 OSAA AAA State Volleyball Champions
- 1974 OSAA AAA State Volleyball Third Place (inaugural OSAA volleyball tournament)
- 1974, '76 & '77 OSAA AAA State Volleyball All-Tournament Team
- 1974 OSAA AAA State Tournament Super Server Award winner
- 1974, '75, '76 & '77 All-Metro League Volleyball honors

Basketball:

- 1979 West Coast Athletic Association (WCAA) All-Conference Second Team
- 1980 WCAA All-Conference Honorable Mention
- 1978 Parade All-American
- 1978 Carnation All-American
- 1978 Scholastic Coach All-American
- 1978 Adidas All-American
- 1977 OSAA AAA Girls' Basketball Runner-up
- 1976 OSAA AAA Girls' Basketball Third Place (inaugural OSAA girls' basketball tournament)
- 1976 & '77 OSAA AAA State Girls' Basketball All-Tournament Team

Track:

- 1977 & '78 OSAA AAA Girls' State Discus Champion
- 1976 OSAA AAA Girls' State Discus Third Place
- 1976, '77 & '78 Metro League Discus and Shot-Put Champion

Softball:

- 1976 American Softball Association (ASA) Nationals All-Tournament Second Team
- 1976 ASA National Tournament Fourth Place



Joe Mauer

Nomination Form

HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

Name of Nominee: Joseph Patrick Mauer
(first, middle, last)

Individual Submitting Nomination:

Name: Timothy Leighton

Phone: 651-226-5591

Street Address: 2100 Freeway Boulevard

City, State, Zip Code: Brooklyn Center, Minnesota 55430

Signed: Timothy Leighton

Email: tleighton@mshsl.org

State Association Verification? True

NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:

Athletes

Name of Nominee: Joseph Patrick Mauer
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: 41988 Palm Street
(street address)

Braham, Minnesota 55006
(city, state, zip)

Email: joseph7mauer@gmail.com

Phone: 239-851-0075 Date of Birth: 4/19/1983

School Affiliation (if any) Cretin-Derham Hall

City: St. Paul State: Minnesota

Place of Birth: St. Paul, Minnesota Date of Retirement: _____

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated? _____

If yes, please explain:

If deceased, date of death:

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: _____

Address: , , _____

Phone: _____

Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School:			
College/University:			
Post Graduate School:			

Athletes

Participation/Career Description/Biography:

* 2001 Graduate of Cretin-Derham Hall High School in St. Paul.
* A three-sport standout in football, basketball and baseball.
* Led Cretin-Derham Hall to two consecutive appearances in the Minnesota State High School League's Class AAAAA football championship game. Class AAAAA was the largest classification of six divisions in Minnesota at the time. By enrollment, Cretin-Derham Hall is a Class AAAA or Class AAAAA school.
* The Raiders won the Prep Bowl football championship in 1999, his junior year, and were runner-up to Eden Prairie the next season.
* In those two seasons, he threw for nearly 6,000 yards and 73 touchdowns.
* As a sophomore, he played little as a quarterback. That season, he played little, but did get a little playing time in a 47-0 victory over St. Paul Como Park. That sophomore would become a Minnesota legend.
* As a starting small forward in basketball, he was a triple threat as a scorer, rebounder and playmaker on the perimeter. Finished career with more than 1,000 points in basketball. After averaging nine points per game as a sophomore, he averaged just more than 20 in his senior season.
* In baseball, he wowed onlookers beginning as a fifth-grader.
* In 222 high school at-bats, he struck out just once. That was in his junior year during the Minnesota State High School League's Baseball State Tournament. As walked back to the dugout, his teammates looked at him with stunned faces. They had never witnessed a strikeout before. "Are you sick or not feeling well?" his teammates asked.
* Led Cretin-Derham Hall to the Class AA baseball state championship in 2001, his senior year.
* As a senior, he batted .605 and tied a national record by hitting a home run in seven consecutive games.
* Finished his prep career with a .567 batting average.

Contributions Athletics/NFHS/Education Philosophy:

Personal Records/Honors/Awards

* Ranks as one of Minnesota's most celebrated high school student-athletes of all time.
* He is one of just three Minnesota high school athletes to receive three Division I offers in three sports. Major League Baseball Hall of Famer Dave Winfield and former Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Barry Wohler are the others.
* Many all-state award recognitions over this three years as a high school player.
* All-State in two publications in basketball his senior season when he averaged 20 points per game.
* Parade All-American in football
* USA Today National Player of the Year in football and baseball
* In his senior year, selected the national player of the year in both football and baseball.
* Gave a verbal commitment to play football at Florida State University.
* In Mauer's junior year, he was selected first-team all-state quarterback. This was his first first-team all-state selection. The wide receiver on that team? Larry Fitzgerald, Jr., who would have a stellar career with the Arizona Cardinals and appears destined for the Pro Football Hall of Fame.
* Was the youngest player ever selected to the U.S. Junior National Baseball team as a 16-year-old. He had been invited as a prospect, but was so impressive that he was selected as one of two starting catchers.
* He later became the No. 1 ranked high school catcher in the nation in the 2001 graduating classe.
* Was 18 years old when selected No. 1 overall in the Major League Baseball Amateur Draft by the Minnesota Twins.

* In Major League Baseball, had a stellar career and spent his entire 15-year career with the Twins that likely will lead to Cooperstown with an induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame.
* He was a six-time American League all-star and is the only catcher in Major League Baseball history to win three batting crowns.
* Also the only American League catcher to win a batting title.
* An imposing presence behind the plate, he won three consectuive Gold Glove Awards from 2008-2010.
* Was a five-time recipient of the Silver Slugger award, an honor presented annually and determined by coaches and managers to be the best offensive player in both the American League and National League.
* In 2009, was selected the American League MVP.
* Inducted into the Minnesota State High School League's Hall of Fame, Class of 2022
* Joe has twice appeared on the cover of Sports Illustrated: Aug. 7, 2006 and June 29, 2009.
* In 2010, he received the largest number of notes of any MLB player for the All-Star Game with more than 5.3 million.
* On Nov. 24, 2009, St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman presents Mauer with a proclamation honoring his baseball achievements.
* On April 12, 2018, Mauer records the 2,000th hit of his career, a two-run single against the Chicago White Sox. He becomes one of just three Twins players to reach that milestone. The others? Hall of Famers Rod Carew and Kirby Puckett.
* In his final at-bat as a professional, he hit a double, his franchise record 428th of his career.
* Joe was inducted into the Minnesota State High School League's Hall of Fame in April, 2022.

Professional Achievements

Other Information

* Joe and his wife, Maddie, are active in the community and work diligently to make a meaningful impact on the lives of others. Their passon for service to others is rooted in their education at Cretin-Derham Hall High School. They are active supporters that assist individuals with disabilities, Gillette Children's Hospital and Healthcare in downtown St. Paul.
* From former Cretin-Derham Hall baseball coach Jim O'Neill, who was asked to pitch for Joe during the 2009 Home Run Derby at the All-Star Game in St. Louis: "What a thrill it was to be invited by Joe to be a part of such a powerful event. He said it was his way of thanking me for all I'd done for him. Really, I thank him for being such a terrific young man with respect for all, and letting me experience it with him. When I was able to meet many of the all-stars in the clubhouse, they just raved about Joe, how genuine and down to earth he is. I've known that since he's been just a little guy."

Letters of Recommendation

MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Nov. 1, 2023
Mr. Bruce Howard
Director, National High School Hall of Fame
P.O. Box 690
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Dear National High School Hall of Fame Selection Committee,

Joe Mauer is a name that is synonymous with excellence here in the state of Minnesota. Through his athletic performance, his respectful and ethical character, and his genuine humility, he has truly set the bar for all Minnesota high school athletes. Therefore, it is my absolute pleasure to offer my greatest support for his nomination for induction into the National Federation of High School's Hall of Fame. Joe Mauer was an incredible athlete at both the high school and professional levels but, as you will learn, was also an accomplished student and was, and continues to be, a person of great virtue.

As an athlete, there are many teammates, coaches and others who could provide much greater detail in describing his outstanding high school career, complete with leading his teams to and through state tournaments, earning Minnesota Gatorade Player of the Year recognition in both football and baseball, and being granted the most elite honor of being named USA Today National Player of the Year by Gatorade in both football and baseball in his senior year. As a three-sport athlete, competing in the class of the largest schools, Joe demonstrated that he was the best of the best during his high school career. With state championships in both football and baseball and being named all-conference, all-section, or all-state, he was at the absolute top in all three sports. In considering his incredible athletic career in historical context, his accomplishments are as impressive as any of the most decorated athletes in Minnesota, and likely, the nation.

Beyond the gridiron, basketball court and baseball diamond, Joe set himself apart as an outstanding role model for younger students. I believe that the seriousness with which he approached his classes, the integrity with which he competed and the respectful way in which he treated his teammates, opponents, and officials, are truly deserving of hall of fame recognition. It was only fitting that when Joe brought his talents to the majors, he would don the Minnesota Twins uniform, continue his incredible performance in the major leagues and ascend to all-star status. As Major League Baseball's Most Valuable Player and three-time American League Batting Champion, he demonstrated the excellence that many Minnesotans first observed in a high school setting.

The qualities that set Joe Mauer apart from others extend well beyond his high school and professional accomplishments. Joe exemplifies integrity, ethics, commitment, and humility. As a player, Joe might disagree with the call of an umpire by simply pausing and casting a questioning look their way, but never say a word. His dedication and class are in a league all his own. Joe is gracious, team-centered, and someone who does not need the limelight, although he typically deserves it. Joe was most recently inducted into the Minnesota State High School

MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

League Hall of Fame as a member of our Class of 2022. As a state, we are immensely proud of him, and Joe could not have been more gracious and appreciative. He is recognized and loved wherever he goes.

In order to better understand why our state thinks so highly of him, a co-worker shared this story. As a young baseball fan, the co-worker's daughter was quite impressed with Joe as a Minnesota Twin and felt compelled to send him birthday cards on his birthday. Much to her surprise and delight, following her first birthday greeting, she received a thank you note from Joe, who personally thanked her for taking time to send him a birthday wish. As one could imagine, this kind act firmly cemented his place as a hero in her eyes and added another example of his friendly "boy next door" personality.

Joe Mauer is one of the most impressive student-athletes to have laced up cleats and sneakers. In addition, he has always displayed the utmost character and integrity, treated everyone with great respect, and focused on others first. He is a hall of famer in every possible way and on behalf of the Minnesota State High School League, we proudly nominate him for the NFHS Hall of Fame.

Respectfully,

Erich Martens

MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Nov. 1, 2023

Mr. Bruce Howard
Director, National High School Hall of Fame
P.O. Box 690
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Dear National High School Hall of Fame Selection Committee,

It is with tremendous enthusiasm and conviction that the Minnesota State High School League submits Joe Mauer as a candidate for the National High School Hall of Fame's Class of 2024. While accompanying evidence will support Joe's legacy as arguably one of the nation's most decorated student-participants ever, in this letter of recommendation, the League will share an anecdote that speaks to the character, passion and cherished memories he has of his high school career.

In November of 2009, Joe was selected the American League's MVP after another banner season with the Minnesota Twins, his hometown team. On the day he was recognized with the award, a press conference was held deep within the cavernous halls of the Humbert H. Humphrey Metrodome.

A sports reporter from the St. Paul Pioneer Press, who had covered Joe throughout his prep career at Cretin-Derham Hall High School, had an idea. You see, later that week, Cretin-Derham Hall and Eden Prairie, two big-school football powers, were playing in the League's football state tournament at the Metrodome. This reporter wondered, and hoped, that perhaps Joe could share an anecdote or reflect on his high school football career days that took place just down the hall less than a decade earlier.

The reporter checked in with the supportive Twins' public relations staff and then patiently waited his turn in the back of the interview room while baseball scribes peppered the humble Mauer, hoping for quotes and soundbites that would enhance their accounts of an MVP season. Joe's grandfather and brothers, all newsmakers in St. Paul, loved the idea as well, for they knew the sacred memories that Joe held from his high school career.

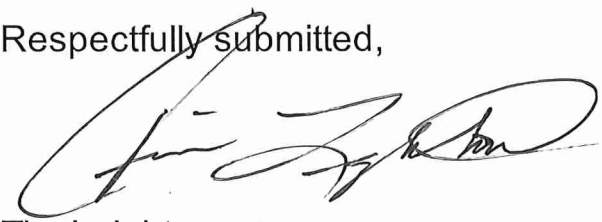
As Mauer finished with the print media, he was guided next to do national radio interviews. He recognized the reporter and greeted him warmly. Twins' personnel were persistent with Mauer, but he held up his hand in pause to learn more about the reporter's request. Mauer was thrilled at the opportunity to reflect on his high school days. For 15 minutes, as they walked the Metrodome together, he continuously smiled as he shared memories. When asked what he missed most about this high school career, his response had nothing to do with state championships or individual accomplishments, which included national player of the year honors in two sports.

Rather, what he missed was the purity of high school sports, the unconditional love and support of friends and teammates and the life lessons learned that gave him the courage to venture into the next chapter of his life. And he beamed with fondness when he shared how much he missed bus rides with friends, "Friday Night Lights" and all the pizza a high school kid could devour.

On the day he was selected the best player in the American League, Mauer's true highlight, he would share later, was to visit about a time that brought him great joy.

Thank you for your consideration of Joe Mauer as an inductee to the National High School's Hall of Fame Class of 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



Tim Leighton

Minnesota State High School League

September 19, 2023

Erich Martens
Executive Director, Minnesota State High School League
2100 Freeway Boulevard
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

Dear Erich,

In my 34 years with the Minnesota Twins, I have had the privilege of watching, and getting to know, not just our franchise greats, but many of the finest athletes our state has produced. Few, if any, are as synonymous with Minnesota as Joe Mauer, a man whose impact as a player is surpassed only by his legacy as a person of the utmost class, character and dignity.

As Joe rose to national prominence as a three-sport star at St. Paul's Cretin-Derham High School, we at the Twins were certainly well-versed in his achievements on the gridiron, on the court and on the diamond. However, what truly convinced us to make him the first overall pick of the 2001 Major League Baseball draft was the person behind the talent. Joe Mauer was, and is, a man of exceptional virtue.

Drafting Joe in 2001 was a transformative moment for the Twins. The abilities we saw as a high schooler – Joe's arm strength, vision and quiet leadership that made him a quarterback recruit of Florida State's Bobby Bowden; the competitiveness and natural athleticism that led him to become a two-time all-state selection in basketball; and the astonishing bat-to-ball skills that produced a .625 batting average with 43 home runs, 170 RBI and only one (one!) strikeout in 222 career prep at-bats – all translated onto the big-league stage.

Joe spent his 15-year major league career in a Twins uniform, amassing accolades worthy of Cooperstown. The three batting titles (most ever by a catcher), the six All-Star selections, five Silver Slugger Awards, three Gold Glove Awards, 2009 American League MVP trophy and four playoff appearances are all well-documented. More importantly, Joe's devotion to his community, state and region has been heartfelt and powerful; his outreach, presence and charitable endeavors continue to this day, well beyond his retirement.

Perhaps Joe's transcendent impact is best summarized by Michael Cuddyer, a teammate and fellow member of the Twins Hall of Fame: "I cannot think of a single person who represented an organization, a community, his city and his state as well as Joe Mauer."

For these reasons and more, it is truly my honor and my pleasure to wholeheartedly support the Minnesota State High School League's nomination of Joe Mauer for the National High School Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

Dave St. Peter
President & CEO
Minnesota Twins Baseball Club

TARGET FIELD
1 Twins Way • Minneapolis, MN 55403
Executive Office: 612.659.3400 • Ticket Office: 612.33.TWINS • twins.com

FROM THE DESK OF PAUL MOLITOR

Dear National Hall of Fame Selection Committee,

I'm highly recommending Joe Mauer to be inducted into the National High School Hall of Fame's Class of 2024.

During his high school career, Joe exhibited exceptional talent and skill in three sports. He excelled at a national level in football, basketball, and of course, baseball.

As a high school athlete, Joe's strong character was evident and always present, as well as his ability to be a leader, in all three sports.

He was able to take these traits and turn them into a phenomenal major league career, which will eventually lead him to becoming a member of the exclusive baseball Hall of Fame.

As a leader at the Major League level, Joe was not the rah-rah type, but when he spoke, people listened. His words were powerful and carried a lot of weight. He was consistent, steady and constantly leading by example while maintaining exceptional humility over all of his accomplishments.

As competitive as anybody, yet always showing respect to his competition as well as umpires, Joe was a tremendously-composed athlete.

Joe currently chooses to remain living in his hometown. He is a wonderful husband and father that continuously gives back to his community in so many ways.

Once selected, Joe would immediately be an asset to the National High School Hall of Fame.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Molitor

Paul Molitor

National Baseball Hall of Fame, Class of 2004

Cretin-Derham Hall

Co-sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and the Brothers of the Christian Schools

Nov. 5, 2023
Mr. Bruce Howard
Director, National High School Hall of Fame
P.O. Box 690
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Dear National High School Hall of Fame Selection Committee,

It is an honor for me to recommend Joe Mauer for selection consideration to the National High School Hall of Fame's Class of 2024. While it has been just more than two decades since Joe has traveled the hallways here at Cretin-Derham Hall, his legacy and impact will remain for generations.

I was blessed to be a part of Joe's high school journey, not just in athletics, but also to witness the ways in which he treated his peers and displayed respect and honor for his teachers, coaches, mentors and family members. Joe's faith-based family is the root system for his commitment to core values of kindness, integrity and moral courage. While in high school, the entire school community respected him and followed his lead.

While Joe was one of those once-in-a-lifetime kinds of athletes, it was also the way he handled things beyond his age. When he was at Cretin-Derham Hall, he had so much attention put on him, but he never flinched. The big-city newspaper assigned a reporter to him for his senior year, but it didn't faze him. I think his mental capacity, his confidence and his maturity are what carried him. I don't think many kids could have handled what Joe did at such a young age.

In school, he noticed a fellow student eating alone at lunch. He befriended the young man and invited him to sit at a lunch table with Joe and his friends. The student was visually impaired, so Joe, his teammates and friends, assisted him in navigating the hallways to make sure he made it to class safely and on time. Joe's act of friendship, kindness and humanity not only created a lasting friendship, but also was a positive part of a fellow student's high school experience.

In athletics, his story is well told, but this one stick out: His older brothers were participating in a summer instructional baseball league for sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders. One day, they let Joe, a fifth-grader, tag along. An extra player was needed for an instructional game and Joe was inserted into the lineup and batted in the No. 10 spot. The first time he came up to bat, the bases were loaded. He promptly hit an over-the-fence grand slam. Joe ran around the bases like nothing happened. He sat down on the bench and the rest of the kids just stood there in awe.

Really, it was a prelude of what was to come.

Cretin-Derham Hall

Co-sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and the Brothers of the Christian Schools

Thank you for your time and your consideration of Joe Mauer for the National High School Hall of Fame's Class of 2024.

Respectfully,

Jim O'Neill

Former Cretin-Derham Hall varsity baseball coach

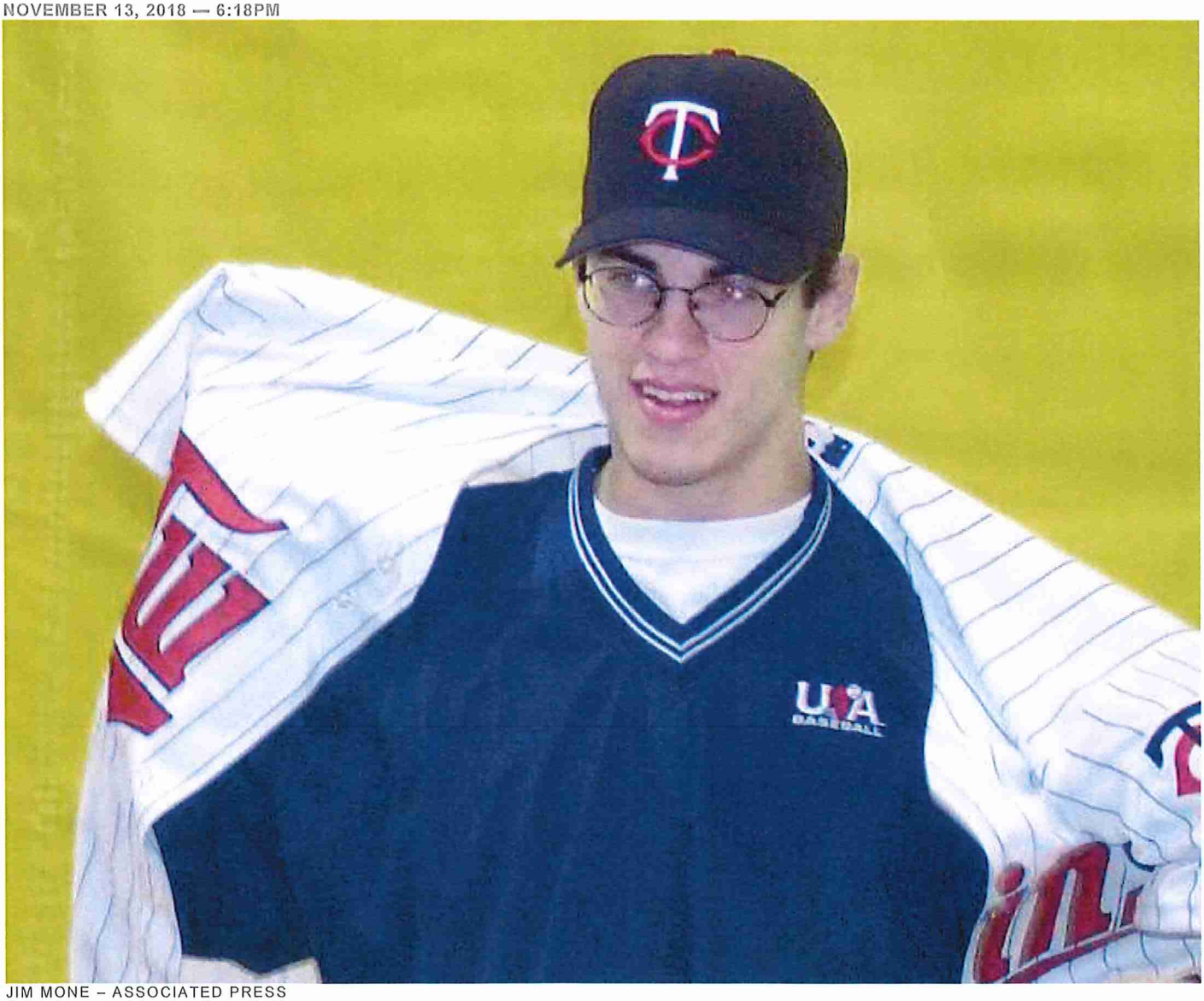
Support Data

TWINS

Memories begin and end with Joe Mauer the three-sport prep star

The relationship columnist Chip Scoggins built with Joe Mauer dates back to their first conversation, when Mauer asked if he could call back after he'd finished his homework.

NOVEMBER 13, 2018 — 6:18PM



JIM MONE – ASSOCIATED PRESS

Joe Mauer, out of Cretin-Derham Hall in St. Paul, was the first overall pick in the Major League Baseball amateur draft in 2001

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Joe Mauer had a major announcement to make in the morning. Rumors were circulating that he would pick Florida State as his college choice. So I called his home number for an interview.

In his typical Gentleman Joe tone, Mauer apologized and asked if we could talk later. He was studying for a test.

True to his word, he called back later that night after finishing his homework.

That was 17½ years ago, and that memory remains fresh because that's how I will remember Joe Mauer's athletic career. Not the middle or the end, but its beginning stages.

I was hired by this newspaper in early January 2000 to cover high school sports. I learned during my interview about a talented multisport athlete at Cretin-Derham Hall. You'll probably write a lot about him, someone mentioned.

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Yeah, just a little.

Being assigned to chronicle Mauer's high school athletic career still stands as one of the highlights of my writing career. Minnesotans love to debate whether Mauer ranks as the state's best athlete ever. My slightly different view: He is the best all-around athlete that I've witnessed in nearly three decades of covering sports for newspapers in six different states.

And it's not close.

As a senior, he was named Gatorade National Player of the Year in football. He was chosen all-state in basketball. And he was the No. 1 overall pick in the Major League Baseball amateur draft.

In an era of sports specialization, Mauer didn't just play three sports. Some viewed him as the best player nationally in two sports and he could've played Division I basketball in his "third" sport.

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"I loved every minute of it," he said Monday at his retirement news conference.

He loved to reminisce about those days, too. Over the years, our conversations at spring training or in the Twins clubhouse often veered back to his high school career, specific games and players that he competed with and against.

In an interview seven years after he graduated, Mauer hadn't forgotten that former Wayzata star Marion Barber III intercepted him three times in high school. Not just remembered, Mauer dissected each interception in specific detail.

"[One] was an out pattern to Tony Leseman," Mauer recalled. "I was on the fifth step of my drop. I saw Barber make a break, so I tried to throw it low and away. He dove for it and was parallel to the ground. It was a pretty impressive play."

Again, seven years after the fact.

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Mauer's laid-back, humble personality masked a fiercely competitive streak. His mom, Teresa, found him lounging on the couch at home the day of the football state championship game. She checked his pulse.

"I had to make sure he was still breathing," she joked. "There were a lot of days like that."

And a lot of memorable performances. Too many to list. He threw game-winning touchdowns, made game-winning shots and struck out only once in 222 career high school at-bats.

A few of my personal favorites:

Mauer passed for 327 yards and four touchdowns in a win over Wayzata in the big-school state semifinals as a senior.

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In the semifinals of the state basketball tournament that year, he posted 25 points, eight rebounds and five assists in a loss to Osseo.

His finest baseball moment came in the state semifinals against Brainerd that year. He hit a game-tying three-run homer in the fifth inning, then pitched the final five innings to earn the win. He struck out nine, only allowed one hit and reached 91 miles per hour on the radar gun.

"That was the moment where I was like, 'Wow, we're watching someone develop into a pretty special deal,' " said Leseman, who remains Mauer's closest friend.

Everyone knew it, especially watching him glide from one sport to the next. Football season would conclude and boom, he's scoring 25 points in a basketball game. Basketball finished and boom, he's hitting rockets to the gap in baseball.

He made everything look effortless. And he displayed no ego doing it. Just the opposite. His personality was so unassuming as a teenage prodigy that you'd have thought he was a backup on the JV team.

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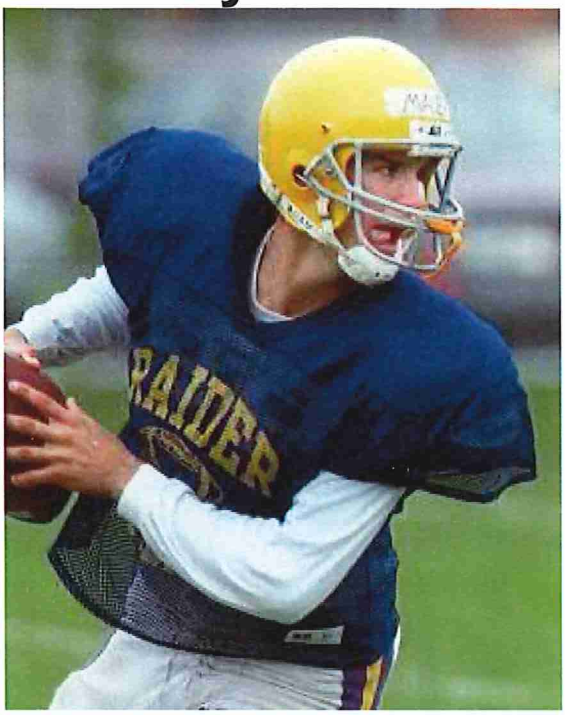
Mauer laid bare his soul at Monday's retirement news conference in a way the public rarely, if ever, witnessed throughout his Twins career. Normally stoic, his emotions and tears came pouring out.

His legacy will be a matter of personal perspective. For some, the focus might be his MVP season. Or that sweet, perfect swing. Or his contract. Or his unfortunate injuries. Or that he was a genuinely nice and classy guy.

Me? I'll always reflect back on the beginning, when I took a new job in a new state and had the good fortune to write about a kid who could do anything.

Chip Scoggins is a sports columnist and enterprise writer for the Star Tribune. He previously covered the Vikings, Gophers football, Wild, Wolves and high school sports in nearly 19 years at the paper.
ascoggins@startribune.com 612-673-4484 @chipscoggins

Choice of a Lifetime: Cretin-Derham Hall star Joe Mauer faces a similar call to one faced by Chris Weinke 10 years ago



Cretin Derham Hall quarterback Joe Mauer rolls out during practice on August 21, 2000. (Pioneer Press: John Doman

By JIM WELLS | Pioneer Press
PUBLISHED: August 31, 2000 at 12:43 p.m. | UPDATED: November 15, 2018 at 2:19 p.m.

Cretin-Derham Hall quarterback Joe Mauer often learns about the latest speculation on his future when he reaches the breakfast table.

"Better take a look at the newspaper today," his dad will say. "Looks like you got a raise."

Some days the speculation takes a different form.

"Better take a look at the newspaper today," his dad will say. "Looks like you're a No. 1 baseball draft pick now."

Florida State quarterback Chris Weinke can relate to what Mauer is going through. Ten years ago, he was the Cretin athlete with the option of pursuing pro baseball or college football. He was deciding between taking a big signing bonus from a baseball team or playing college football.

"What made it easier for me, and people didn't seem to realize this, was that I went through my whole senior year not knowing if I would get drafted in baseball," Weinke recalled recently. "It wasn't something I truly thought about, so I focused on having a good senior year."

As a junior, Weinke took the Raiders to the state football championship game, where they lost to Blaine in the final second.

As a junior last year, Mauer took the Raiders to the state football championship game, where they defeated Hastings.

And the similarities only begin there.

"They're both left-handed hitters, great baseball players," Raiders football coach Rich Kallok said. "They're both tremendous in the huddle and with the ball in their hands with the game on the line."

"They both know what they're doing. They understand the offense and its concepts and take that knowledge and make the team function as a smooth unit. They're like having coaches on the field. Chris might be a little stronger physically, but not much."

Mauer is rated as high as the No. 8 quarterback in the country by some recruiting services. He's also likely to be one of the first catchers taken in next spring's amateur baseball draft, and could demand a signing bonus of $1 million to $2 million.

Mauer led the Raiders to a 13-0 record and the Class 5A football championship last season. He completed 59 percent of his passes for 2,500 yards and 32 touchdowns. This summer he batted .559 for the U.S. junior national baseball team.

Ten years ago, Weinke took a $400,000 bonus from the Toronto Blue Jays, invested it and played minor league baseball for six seasons. Then he quit baseball and enrolled at Florida State at age 24 to play football, spent eight months in rehabilitation after injuring his neck two years ago and last season led the Seminoles to the national title.

Although he said he wouldn't change a thing about his career and life, he doesn't advise everyone to do it his way.

He and Mauer talked last May when Weinke was in the Twin Cities.

"Basically, he told me just to enjoy my senior year and not think about it," Mauer said.

Weinke said he doesn't usually offer advice but doesn't mind pointing out some of the things he has learned.

"I always hesitate to point a kid in one direction," he said. "I told (Joe) that situations are different for every person, that's the best advice I could give him. He'll have to do what his heart tells him to do."

Ron Weinke, Chris's father, had some minor reservations about Chris's decision to play baseball out of high school.

"He had played only two years of quarterback, and I thought he had a lot of untapped ability as a football player," Ron explained. "But... that was the second-highest bonus paid at the time. He always seemed to make the right decisions."

Weinke, 28, is several years older than many of his classmates at Florida State, but said he wouldn't change the way he went about his career after graduating from Cretin.

"I wouldn't take a million dollars for my experiences," said Weinke, who invested his bonus money wisely and has a comfortable back account today.

He also understands that Mauer might do precisely what he did, particularly with the baseball bonus money available today.

"You can't put a monetary value on college and its experiences," Weinke said, "but if you're a first-round pick in baseball, it's really unbelievable what they're putting up for bonus money."

Mauer is in an enviable position. He might be able to do what his heart and his pocketbook tell him to do.

He has said frequently that baseball is his favorite sport. His father, Jake, Jr., said he thought that was always true, too, although he had to wonder a year ago.

"We're pretty much a baseball family," Jake said, "but football kind of exploded last year at Cretin. So now that kind of came into the equation."

Yet...

"I think he favors baseball," Jake said, "but maybe that's wishful (thinking) on my part."

Joe Mauer seems to like whatever sport is in season.

"I've thought for a long time that I liked baseball best, but it sometimes depends on the season," he said. "I really like football right now."

The challenge of the moment seems to be what motivates the Raiders' quarterback, one of the key players on a team that lost several big-time players to graduation.

The challenge this year?

"Basically to get back to where we were (last year)," Mauer said. "We lost a lot of guys but we have a lot of guys coming back such as Rashon (Powers-Neal), Kim (Sarin) and Tony (Leseman). It will take time to get back to where we were as a team, but we're capable of that or maybe being better."

Mauer's strong arm (throwing to second base or on a post pattern) puts him in the company of Cretin's former great quarterbacks, Weinke at Florida State and Steve Walsh, an 11-year NFL veteran who guided the University of Miami to a national title.

"That's quite an honor to be compared to those two guys," Mauer said. "They are great quarterbacks and great people. It's kind of neat to be compared to them. They've both been real successful."

Florida State and its fans have come to love Weinke. Seminoles scouts have their eyes on Mauer, too. He is No. 1 on their list of high school quarterbacks and has not ruled out playing there. He also hasn't ruled out Minnesota, Arizona, Michigan and Michigan State.

Nor has he ruled out approaching his career the way Weinke did.

"I could see myself doing that," Mauer said. "I just don't know right now what type of situation I'll be in."

Mauer isn't opposed to playing football and baseball at some college, either.

"There are a lot of ways I could do this," he said.

Much of that will be decided next spring when Mauer learns what kind of bonus money baseball will offer him.

"Nobody's offered anything yet, and, until they do, I don't have anything to decide," he said.

Neither did Chris Weinke before the Blue Jays made their irresistible offer.

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MINNESOTA TWINS

Joe Mauer's playing career inspired younger Twins from Minnesota: 'It made me realize it was possible'



Minnesota Twins designated hitter Joe Mauer laughs with Texas Rangers catcher Chris Gimenez before batting during the first inning of a baseball game at Target Field in Minneapolis on Aug. 13, 2015. (Holly Peterson / Pioneer Press)



By **BETSY HELFAND** | bhelfand@pioneerpress.com | St. Paul Pioneer Press
PUBLISHED: August 4, 2023 at 2:21 p.m. | UPDATED: August 4, 2023 at 7:39 p.m.

Caleb Thielbar had heard the whispers growing up — there was a kid in St. Paul who was an exceptional young athlete — but in those days, social media didn't exist and there weren't any YouTube highlights to watch. So, Thielbar, a Northfield native, really didn't have any clue how good Joe Mauer actually was until the latter broke into the big leagues with his home-state Twins.

"I think we all knew, 'Oh, this kid Joe Mauer is in Minnesota. He's really good. Good football player, good baseball player,' " said Thielbar, a Twins relief pitcher since 2013. "But I think from a — knock on wood — Hall of Fame trajectory, we didn't see that kind of thing because we would have had to go and watch him to see what he was doing."

Things changed quickly. By the time pitcher Louie Varland, currently with the Saints, was growing up in the St. Paul area, Mauer was an idol to baseball players across the state. Varland had a Mauer poster plastered on his wall from third grade through high school.

The Twins will induct the 40-year-old St. Paul native, Cretin-Derham Hall alum and longtime Twins player — he spent his entire 15-year career in Minnesota — into their Hall of Fame on Saturday. It will be a special day for Mauer and those close to him. It also figures to be meaningful for the Minnesotans within the Twins' organization who grew up watching him.

"It made me realize it was possible," Varland, 25, said of a major-league career.

The pitcher called Mauer one of his heroes growing up. He still has a Mauer rookie card that he would like to have him sign one day.

Matt Wallner, 25, a Forest Lake native, strikes a similar tone. Watching Mauer and Justin Morneau — the pair were teammates with the Twins from 2004 when Mauer debuted to 2013 when Morneau was traded — was the "heart" of his baseball fandom as a kid, Wallner said.

"Him especially being from Minnesota … that was always fun from a fan's point of view and kind of just a little dream that I could be in that position one day," the Twins outfielder said. "It felt really great to see how that was. Not to Joe Mauer's level, but just playing for the Twins as a hometown kid, which is pretty cool."

Unlike Wallner and Varland, Thielbar, 36, wasn't a young kid while Mauer was in his prime. He was in high school when Mauer debuted. Later, he was his teammate for multiple seasons, occupying the locker next to Mauer's corner spot in the Twins' clubhouse.

Thielbar is one of just a small number of current Twins who overlapped with Mauer, playing with him from 2013-15 during his first stint with the Twins.

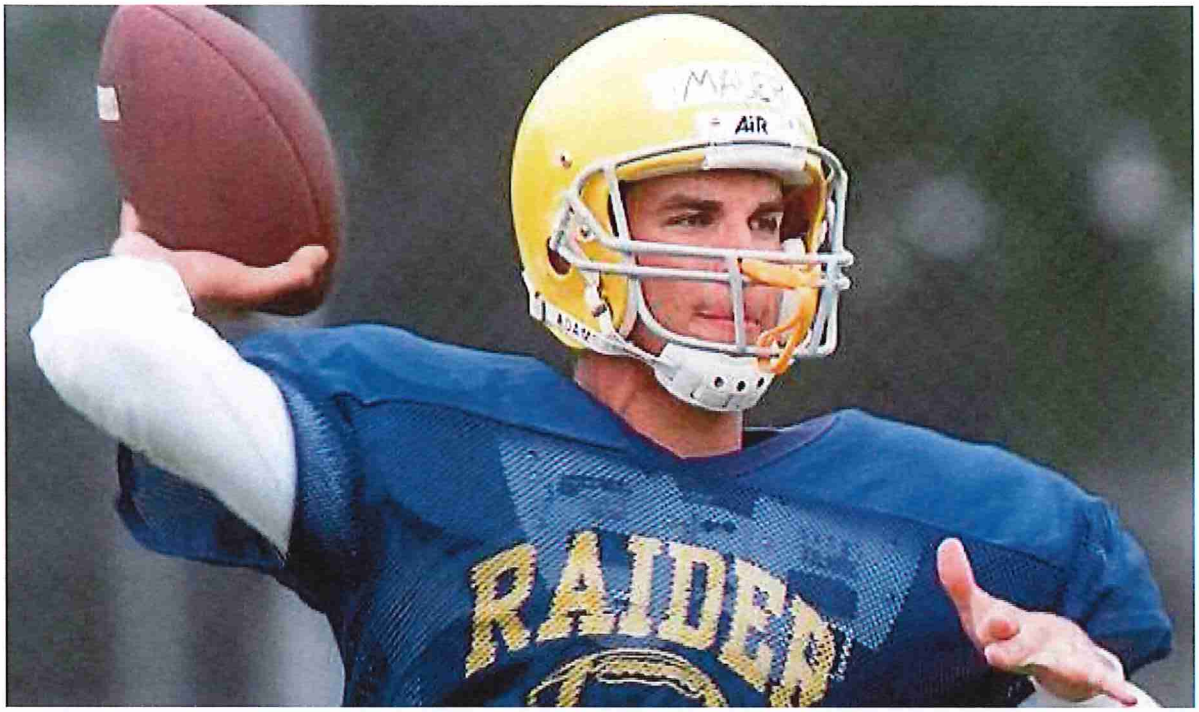
"Watching him play in high school and then have him catch my debut was something pretty special," Thielbar said. "I'll always remember that."

Nearly five seasons after his retirement — Mauer hung it up for good after the 2018 season — his presence can still be felt around Target Field, from the countless number of jerseys bearing his name to his jersey No. 7, which the Twins retired the year after he did.

On Saturday, he will formally take his place among Twins greats.

"Getting to play his entire career here, it's just uncommon," Thielbar said. "... I think if you talk to him, he'd say it was kind of a storybook career. You grow up in Minnesota and play for your hometown team for your entire career and retire here and he's still a big part of the Twin Cities. It's a cool thing. It's a cool thing for his family, and I'm happy for him."

Prep Bowl's biggest star? How about Twins' Joe Mauer



Joe Mauer, the two-time national player of the year, led the Cretin-Derham Hall Raiders to a big-school championship in 1999 and a runner-up finish the following year. Against Hastings in 1999, he engineered three touchdowns in a 2 1/2-minute span. Mauer finished his two-year run at 25-2 with 5,528 yards and 73 touchdowns. (Pioneer Press: John Doman)

By **PIONEER PRESS** | news@pioneerpress.com | Pioneer Press

PUBLISHED: November 26, 2013 at 11:01 p.m. | UPDATED: November 7, 2015 at 10:27 a.m.

Joe Mauer graduated from Cretin-Derham Hall more than a decade ago. But the former Raiders quarterback, a national high school football player of the year, still has his former coach Mal Scanlan wondering, "What if?"

Before Mauer was an MVP catcher for the Twins, he was the best high school football player in America. Named player of the year by USA Today and Parade magazine, he completed 179 of 290 passes for 3,016 yards and 41 touchdowns during his senior year at Cretin-Derham Hall in the fall of 2000.

Mauer committed to play football at Florida State before the Twins made him the No. 1 pick in the amateur baseball draft in June 2001.

As good as Mauer was on the football field, his former coach insists he could have been better — if the coaching staff had known how to use him properly.

"Do you realize what kind of damage he could have done if we had him in the shotgun?" asked Scanlan, the football team's co-coach when Mauer played for the Raiders. "I kick myself for not doing it then, but we were old school."

Cretin-Derham Hall used Mauer as a classic dropback passer, and his strong arm provided weekly Friday night thrills.

He saved some of his best play for the Prep Bowl games at the Metrodome. In fact, the Pioneer Press has selected Mauer as the dominant player in the 32-year history of the high school state championship games played under the Teflon roof.

In a two-year stretch during his junior and senior seasons, Mauer led the Raiders to a 25-2 record and two berths in the big-school Prep Bowl championship game. Cretin-Derham Hall defeated Hastings 42-21 in 1999 and lost the following season to Eden Prairie 24-14.

Against Hastings, Mauer threw for 306 yards and four touchdowns, including three in a 2 1/2-minute span that gave the Raiders to a 35-14 halftime lead.

"What a terrific arm he had," said Bob Majeski, the Hastings coach in 1999. "He just had super composure, was super confident and was very accurate. He always seemed so under control. It's like now when he is at the plate with a full count. He just handles every game situation with calm and poise."

In the following season's Prep Bowl, Mauer was sacked by two Eden Prairie players on the first play from scrimmage. He suffered a deep thigh bruise but didn't tell anyone. He completed just 14 of 32 passes. The injury kept sidelined him for the first three weeks of basketball season.

"Going into the game, Mauer had only been sacked once all year," Eden Prairie coach Mike Grant remembered. "The question became, how do you bring pressure on the guy? He had big receivers that we had to keep in check, too. The ability to keep him under a little bit of control was key. We more contained him than stopped him."

Mauer finished his high school career completing 341 of 570 passes for 5,528 yards and 73 touchdowns.

"Every time Mauer throws a pass, you hold your breath," former Blaine coach Dave Nelson told the Pioneer Press in 1999.

"I've always said that nobody coached Joe," Scanlan said. "He just had a ton of natural ability, was athletically gifted and smart. He didn't need time in a game to get going. The first pass of the game was right on the money. He might have wanted to play out of the shotgun, too, but he was too polite to say anything."

No one eats alone: 'Silent Impact' of Joe Mauer's act of kindness still reverberates as Thumbs Up embarks on initiative with support of KSTP's Joe Schmit

- Jul 29, 2022 Updated Jul 29, 2022

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KSTP sports director Joe Schmit, Mike Hally, Joe Mauer and Katie Shatusky give thumbs up after the reunion of Hally and Mauer was captured on video.

KSTP's Joe Schmit facilitated the reunion inside the lunchroom at Cretin-Derham Hall High School.

by Jim Boyle

Editor

When Katie Shatusky first read about Joe Mauer's simple act of kindness to have lunch with a blind high school classmate who was sitting alone, she was moved.

The words in the 2014 book "Silent Impact: Stories of Influence through Purpose, Persistence and Passion," authored by family friend and KSTP sports director Joe Schmit leaped off the page for Shatusky, who was still grieving the 2010 loss of her grandfather to a completed suicide. She was also processing how to move forward in an age where many still considered the topics of suicide and mental illness taboo. That was not going to work for her family, and that's not what she wanted for her community either.

The personalized note Schmit included when he signed her Valentine's Day gift was like gasoline on the sparks that were dancing in her head about how to move forward.

"I felt like you were telling me what I should do," Shatusky told Schmit in a recent story that aired on 5 Eyewitness News.

Shatusky founded the nonprofit Thumbs Up that year in honor of her grandpa, who greeted his 19 grandchildren with a smile and a thumbs up. The organization held a 5K in 2014 that attracted 500 people in its first running. Schmit was the keynote speaker.

It has become an annual event. Participation nearly topped 1,000 this past year when more than $87,000 was raised. The 9th annual 5K run, walk and

bike event is scheduled for Sept. 17 at Woodland Trails Regional Park in Elk River.

The ideas in Shatusky's mind are still sparking, and the organization's reach is growing like wildfire as she now holds a paid position and Melissa Bowers works as an administrative assistant to help lead the army of volunteers.

The group opened a center in downtown Elk River earlier where the organization offers regular programming and drop-in services. Thumbs Up partners with other organizations to reach people. Students in the schools are a huge focus. Thumbs Up provides schools cheer bags, calming corners and funds to help people receive counseling. Shatusky and her team also continue churning out ideas.

Latest spark of an idea brings things full circle for Shatusky

This year Shatusky went to Schmit with a "crazy idea" of retelling Mauer's story and reuniting the retired Minnesota Twin and Mike Hally, who Maurer pulled into his circle of friends at lunch 21 years ago and each day for the rest of his senior year at Cretin-Derham Hall.

Schmit agreed it was a "crazy idea" and said he would pose the question to Mauer. He told her not to get her hopes up.

A roughly 9-minute segment on Thumbs Up and the reunion of the Cretin-Derham Hall graduates aired on July 6. The video is now housed on

the station's website, and the hope is it will be aired in homerooms across Minnesota. It can be found at: https://bit.ly/3za9fUW.

"We're hoping to inspire kids to go out on a limb and really be like Joe Mauer," Shatusky told the Star News. "I don't know how else to say it.

"He's so humble about it. That's what I love. Joe Schmit asked why did you do that? Because it was the right thing to do."

Here in the Elk River Area School District, Shatusky is partnering with ISD 728 to roll out a pilot program called "No one eats alone."

Elk River will be ground zero for 'No one eats alone' pilot

The effort is being funded with the help of a $5,000 grant from Sherburne County Area United Way. The hope is to eventually partner with other nearby school districts. Interest is already spilling in from all over, including Appleton, Wisconsin.

"The idea is for this not to be just one video and done," she said. "There's a curriculum we're working on by partnering with the district."

The idea is once the video is shown in a classroom or a homeroom at area middle schools and high schools, there would be a worksheet or something teachers could work with the students on to learn what they took away from it and what this could mean for them.

Grants are also being written to create bracelets with the "No one eats alone" name on one side and the link to that video on the inside.

Subtle reminders could be made in the form of posters in the lunchroom showing Joe Mauer and Mike Hally.

"It's hard to get buy-in with kids,' Shatusky said. "It has to be there in their world and wherever they are living on social media. Maybe we could create an app. There are lots of ideas on the table."

Joe Schmit and Shatusky also got asked to speak at a meeting of superintendents in October.

Schmit will be giving a keynote address and talking about the story. Shatusky and likely others from the school district will be doing a breakout session.

"I know kids are so connected to their phones and devices," Shatusky said. "We're trying to see how we can get our kids to put their phones down and look around. We'd like to see them have community and have face-to-face conversations, helping kids who are different feel accepted."



Marcus Spears

Nomination Form

HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

Name of Nominee: Marcus Rayshon Spears
(first, middle, last)

Individual Submitting Nomination:

Name: Karen Hoyt

Phone: 2253004215

Street Address: 12720 Old Hammond Hwy

City, State, Zip Code: Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70816

Signed: Karen Hoyt

Email: khoyt@lhsaa.org

State Association Verification? True

NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:

Athletes

Name of Nominee: Marcus Rayshon Spears
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: 5802 Chamberlyne Drive
(street address)

Frisco, Texas 75034
(city, state, zip)

Email: marcus.spears@espn.com

Phone: 404-840-7653 Date of Birth: 3/8/1983

School Affiliation (if any) _____

City: Baton Rouge State: _____

Place of Birth: Baton Rouge, Louisiana Date of Retirement: _____

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated? __Yes_____

If yes, please explain:
Marcus is a NFL analyst for ESPN covering NFL news and live games.

If deceased, date of death:

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: _____

Address: , , _____

Phone: _____

Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Southern Lab	Baton Rouge, Louisiana	2001	
College/University: LSU	Baton Rouge, Louisiana	2005	
Post Graduate School:			

Athletes

Participation/Career Description/Biography:

Marcus Spears attended Baton Rouge's Southern University Laboratory School, where he excelled not only on the football field but on the basketball court as well. He finished his final prep season with 28 receptions for 435 yards and three touchdowns and 245 rushing yards and six touchdowns on offense and 22 tackles for losses, 11.5 quarterback sacks and four fumble recoveries on defense. As a senior, Spears led Southern Lab to the 1A state runner up finish in football, the 1A state title in basketball, and to a third place showing in track and field. Spears was also one of the nation's top basketball prospects. He played in the first ever U.S. Army All-American Bowl game on December 30, 2000. Spears went on to play football at LSU where he played tight end, fullback, and defensive end from 2001-2004.
Football is classified 1A - 5A. Basketball is classified C - 5A.

Contributions Athletics/NFHS/Education Philosophy:

Personal Records/Honors/Awards

Spears was named first team All-State in football on both offense and defense; the first player to be honored on both sides of the ball in Louisiana in any class since 1991. Spears hails from Baton Rouge, La, where he was a highly sought after two-sport high school athlete, recruited for both basketball and football. He played tight end, fullback and defensive end for LSU's football team under Nick Saban from 2001-04. During his sophomore year he became a full-time defensive player and his contributions to the team helped lead the Tigers to two SEC Championships titles (2001, 2003) and a win in the 2004 BCS National Championship. The 2002 season marked his first as a full-time defensive player, in which he recorded 46 tackles, 16 quarterback pressures, 3.5 tackles for losses and three sacks. In 2003, during LSU's national championship season, Spears contributed 49 tackles, 23 quarterback pressures, 13 tackles for losses, six sacks and six passes defensed to earn First-team All-SEC honors.
During his 2004 senior season, Spears put together a career year, earning first-team All-America honors from the Walter Camp Foundation, American Football Coaches Association, and AP, and second-team All-America honors from Sports Illustrated, first-team All-SEC honors, and was a semifinalist for the Bednarik Award and Lombardi Award. He finished the year tying his career-high in tackles (49) while setting career-highs for tackles for losses (17) and sacks (nine, a figure that ranks fourth in the LSU single-season records). He also recorded 21 quarterback pressures to help the Tigers finish the year third in the country in total defense.
Football: The No.1 rated tight end prospect in American listed as the No. 3 overall prospect by Superprep, a consensus All-American. Listed as an All-American by Parade Magazine, ESPN, Fox Sports, Superprep, Prepstar, The Sporting News, USA Today Dick Butkus High School All-American and Rivals.com. Strength Shoe/Louisiana Football Magazine High School Player of the Year. Touchdown Club of Atlanta-Bobby Dodd National High School Awards Program-2000 Lineman of the Year. Named 1st Team 1A All-State on both offense and defense.
Basketball: Played on Class 1A State Championship Team twice named 1A State Championship Game MVP named State Tournament MVP 2001. Twice name to 1A All State Team/Louisiana Gatorade Player of the Year 2001. Played in Nike Basketball Classic in Louisville, Kentucky 2001. Invited to Nike All-American Camp in 1999 and 2000 was ranked No. 11 Power Forward in the nation by Sporting News.
College – Louisiana State University: Played tight end, fullback and defensive end as a freshman. Earning freshman All-SEC Honors. Returned an interception 20 yards for a touchdown to give the tigers a 21-7 lead enroute to a 21-14 win over Oklahoma in the Sugar Bowl to claim the National Title. Finished LSU career with 34.5 tackles for loss, 19 sacks (fifth most in school history). Senior season earned 1st team All-American Honors from the Walter Camp Foundation and American Football Coaches Association. 1st team All-SEC.

Pro Football: Was the 20th pick in the first round of the 2005 NFL draft by the Dallas Cowboys. Earned All-Rookie Honors from Pro Football Weekly. Has been a starter since rookie season named to the Dallas Cowboys All-Decade team.

Professional Achievements

Other Information

Drafted in the first round of the 2005 NFL Draft by the Dallas Cowboys, Spears played defensive end for nine NFL seasons, retiring in 2014.

Marcus Spears is an NFL analyst for ESPN who appears daily on NFL Live. The former NFL defensive end initially joined ESPN as a college football analyst for the SEC Network in April 2014. Spears began appearing on NFL Live in 2019, which led to his new pro football-centric analyst role in June 2020. In addition to appearing on ESPN's weekday NFL news and information show, Spears is a regular contributor to Get Up, SportsCenter, First Take and other ESPN television and radio shows.

Prior to focusing on the NFL, Spears provided analysis on SEC Network's popular Saturday morning football pregame show SEC Nation alongside Tim Tebow, Paul Finebaum and host Laura Rutledge. He also launched Thinking Out Loud on SEC Network, joining Greg McElroy and Alyssa Lang for a weekly hour of SEC football banter.

Letters of Recommendation

EDDIE BONINE, M.Ed., CAA
Executive Director

LEE SANDERS
KAREN HOYT
ADAM MACDOWELL
MICHAEL FEDERICO
Assistant Executive Directors

October 31, 2023

NFHS Hall of Fame Selection Committee,

On behalf of the Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) and as the Executive Director, I am writing to recommend Marcus Spears for the National High School Hall of Fame. As you read the accompanying documents, you will find that Marcus was a tremendous high school, college, and professional athlete from the state of Louisiana. I have only been in the state of Louisiana for a decade, so I respectfully yield to the historians written submissions to the committee. I had the privilege and honor to induct Marcus into the Louisiana High School Hall of Fame Class of 2021. It is my hope you will give National Hall of Fame consideration to Marcus, who is very deserving and stands out amongst several outstanding athletes from the great state of Louisiana.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eddie Bonine
Executive Director
LHSAA

Support Data

Most people know his name and face from appearances on several ESPN-based programs these days. There is much more to Marcus Spears' life and story.

He was a star at LSU and helped the Tigers win a national title before moving on to the Dallas Cowboys and the NFL. But the story that best illustrates who Marcus Spears is comes from his high school career at Southern Lab School in Baton Rouge, La.

Yes, there were championships in basketball and one finals appearance in football too. All these accolades were packed into just two years of varsity competition while playing for his father's alma mater

Spears was ruled ineligible to play his sophomore season by the LHSAA based on an interpretation of parental custody after his parents were divorced.

Fast-forward 20 years and an athlete like the 6-foot-5, 270-pound Spears would likely have moved to another state or enrolled at a prep school. Spears stayed and became a star.

The courage and inner strength it took for Spears to navigate a year away from high school sports spoke volumes about his character, along with the strength of his family. Those qualities have served Spears well throughout his adult life.

Of course, once Spears got the chance to play, his mix of speed, strength and skill made his two years competing for Southern Lab exceptional. Some recruiting experts thought Spears was Louisiana's top football recruit in 2001 as a tight end-defensive end. But he also excelled in basketball.

Spears was selected Louisiana's Gatorade Player of the Year in basketball in 2001 for a Southern Lab program that played in multiple national tournaments each year. He was adept at making 3-pointers and averaged a double-double in points and rebounds.

On the football field, Spears led the Kittens to the Class 1A title game in 2000. He had more than 400 yards receiving and also led Southern Lab in sacks and tackles for loss.

For good measure, he even threw a 75-yard touchdown pass on what looked like a running play in Southern Lab's Class 1A title game loss to Haynesville. And at the end of his senior season, Spears was The Advocate newspaper's Boys Athlete of the Year, beating a talented field of athletes, including future LSU teammate and NFL player Michael Clayton.

Some high school standouts play for four or more years. Marcus Spears did not have that option. But Spears made the most of opportunities that he had … something I think makes him a worthy candidate for NFHS Hall of Fame consideration.

Robin Fambrough
High School Sportswriter
The (Baton Rouge) Advocate newspaper

Hardwood to Gridiron: Basketball players who ended up in the NFL

- October 4, 2021
- By Rene Nadeau
- Category: Analysis, LSU, Pro Basketball, Pro Football, Saints



DE Marcus Spears (6-5, 300)

He attended Southern Lab (Baton Rouge) where he was All-State in both football and basketball. On the hardwood, he averaged 23.7 points and 15 rebounds as a senior. He was considered the #1 tight end prospect in the country in the 2000 recruiting class and a top three overall prospect. During his college recruitment, he actually had an offer from the Duke Blue Devils for basketball but decided on football at LSU where Nick Saban moved him to defensive end. The Tigers captured a BCS National title in 2003, and Spears intercepted a pass, returning it for a touchdown in the national championship game. He was the first round draft pick of the Cowboys in 2005 and played in Dallas through 2012 in Dallas. He capped his career with the Ravens in 2013. Marcus totaled 236 career tackles and 10 sacks.

Category: Gatorade Awards & Honors

Award: Louisiana Gatorade Player of the Year

Awards By Season

International Format

SORT: SEASON ↓ COLUMNS: SWIPE

Season	Player	Pos	HT	WT	Birth City	Birth Date	High School	HS Grad	Draft Year	College
2023	Chris Lockett, Jr.	F	6-5	205	New Orleans, LA	Nov 6, 2004	Isidore Newman School	2023	2027	Boise State
2022	Solomon Washington	F	6-7	220	New Orleans, LA	-	Carver High School	2022	2026	Texas A&M
2021	Carlos Stewart Jr.	G	6-1	193	Baton Rouge, LA	May 6, 2003	The Dunham School	2021	2025	LSU
2020	Reece Beekman	PG	6-3	190	Milwaukee, WI	Oct 8, 2001	Scotlandville High School	2020	2025	Virginia
2019	Jalen Cook	PG	6-0	194	Walker, LA	Mar 25, 2002	Walker High School	2020	2025	LSU

2015	Wayde Sims	PF	6-6	217	Baton Rouge, LA	Dec 13, 1997	Louisiana State University Laboratory School	2016	2020	LSU
2014	Trey Touchet	G	6-2	190	Lafayette, LA	Nov 15, 1995	St. Thomas More School	2014	2019	McNeese State
2013	Trey Touchet	G	6-2	190	Lafayette, LA	Nov 15, 1995	St. Thomas More School	2014	2019	McNeese State
2012	Rico Gathers	PF	6-8	275	LaPlace, LA	Jan 7, 1994	Riverside Academy	2012	2016	Baylor
2011	Rico Gathers	PF	6-8	275	LaPlace, LA	Jan 7, 1994	Riverside Academy	2012	2016	Baylor
2010	Matt Derenbecker	SF	6-7	219	Baton Rouge, LA	Aug 30, 1991	Metairie Park Country Day	2010	2015	New Orleans
2009	Matt Derenbecker	SF	6-7	219	Baton Rouge, LA	Aug 30, 1991	Metairie Park Country Day	2010	2015	New Orleans
2008	Greg Monroe	FC	6-11	265	Harvey, LA	Jun 4, 1990	Helen Cox High School	2008	2010	Georgetown
2007	Greg Monroe	FC	6-11	265	Harvey, LA	Jun 4, 1990	Helen Cox High School	2008	2010	Georgetown
2006	Tweety Carter	PG	5-11	185	New Orleans, LA	Oct 25, 1986	Reserve Christian School	2006	2010	Baylor
2005	Tasmin Mitchell	SF	6-7	245	Denham Springs, LA	Jun 25, 1986	Denham Springs High School	2005	2010	LSU
2004	Glen Davis	PF	6-9	289	Baton Rouge, LA	Jan 1, 1986	Louisiana State University Laboratory School	2004	2007	LSU
2003	Brandon Bass	PF	6-8	250	Baton Rouge, LA	Apr 30, 1985	Capitol High School	2003	2005	LSU
2002	Darrel Mitchell	PG	5-11	175	New Iberia, LA	May 3, 1984	St. Martinville High School	2002	2006	LSU
2001	Marcus Spears	F	6-5	285	Baton Rouge, LA	Mar 8, 1983	Southern University Laboratory School	2001	2005	LSU
2000	Chris Duhon	G	6-1	190	Mamou, LA	Aug 31, 1982	Salmen High School	2000	2004	Duke



Takeo Spikes

Nomination Form

HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

Name of Nominee: Takeo Gerard Spikes
(first, middle, last)

Individual Submitting Nomination:

Name: James R Hines, Jr.

Phone: 4783386029

Street Address: 151 S Bethel St

City, State, Zip Code: Thomaston, Georgia 30286

Signed: James R Hines, Jr.

Email: robin.hines@ghsa.net

State Association Verification? True

NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:

Athletes

Name of Nominee: Takeo Gerard Spikes
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: 3475 Roxboro Rd NE, Unit 11
(street address)

Atlanta, Georgia 30326
(city, state, zip)

Email: tko51@me.com

Phone: -4046686585 Date of Birth: 12/17/1976

School Affiliation (if any) Washington County High School

City: Sandersville State: Georgia

Place of Birth: Augusta, Georgia Date of Retirement: 8/1/2013

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated? __Yes_____

If yes, please explain:
Takeo Spikes is an analyst for the ESPN/SEC Network. He is currently on the show SEC Now and has his own show called Out of Pocket.

If deceased, date of death:

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative:

Address: , ,

Phone:

Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Washington County High School	Sandersville, Georgia	1995	diploma
College/University: Auburn University	Auburn, Alabama	1998	Communications
Post Graduate School: University of Miami	Coral Gables, Florida	2017	MBA

Athletes

Participation/Career Description/Biography:

Washington County High School (1991-1995) AA (there were A, AA, AAA,and AAAA at the time).
4 year letterman in football and track and field
Takeo was a multi-event participant in track and field receiving region and state honors as a sophomore, junior and senior.
He led his football team to a 41-3 record (15-0 as a senior) his last three years in high school.
Washington County had won only three playoff games in the previous three decades prior to his arrival.

Contributions Athletics/NFHS/Education Philosophy:

Personal Records/Honors/Awards

1st Team All Region in Football 1992, 1993 and 1994
Region Player of the Year 1994
1994 Macon Telegraph Player of the Year
Macon Telegraph All Middle Gerogia
Augusta Chronicle 1st Team All CSRA
All State Football 1993 and 1994
1994 Parade All American
1994 USA Today All American
Georgia All Classification Defensive Player of the Year
Selected to the Georgia/Florida All Star Team 1995
Georgia Player of the Game in the 1995 GA/FL All Star Game
Three Year Starter at Auburn University
Two-Time All SEC selection
All American as a Junior (left for the NFL after his Junior Year)
13th pick overall by the Cincinnati Bengals in the 1998 NFL Draft
Two-time Pro Bowl selection
One time All Pro
Played for Cincinnati, Buffalo, Philidaelphia, San Francisco and San Diego in the NFL
One of 7 linebackers to achieve more than 200 career starts in the NFL (219 total)
Only once did Takeo fail to record at least 70 tackles in a season
He was a team captain in 13 out of his 15 NFL seasons

Professional Achievements

Other Information

Takeo Spikes, a NFL linebacker Legend, excelled in both football and photography. He was a two-time All-Pro, Pro Bowl selection, and one of only seven linebackers in NFL history with more than 200 starts. Spikes also played college football at Auburn University and won numerous awards.
He began his broadcasting career while still playing football and has since appeared on numerous TV and radio programs. He also launched the award-winning podcast, "Behind the Mask" featuring conversations with top athletes and celebrities. As a photographer, he published a book, "Behind the Mask" featuring stories and photos of some of the greatest NFL linebackers. After retirement, Spikes completed his Bachelor's degree at Auburn and his MBA at the University of Miami. He was inducted into Alabama and Georgia Sports Hall of Fame and now is a nominee for the college and Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Spikes contributes to his community by mentoring middle and high school students at his annual TKO Camps, speaking at symposiums, and serving as an advisor to the NFL's football operations department.

Letters of Recommendation

GEORGIA

DR. JAMES R. HINES, JR., Executive Director
151 S. BETHEL STREET
THOMASTON, GA 30286-0004
TELEPHONE 706-647-7473
FAX 706-647-2638
www.ghsa.net

ERNIE YARBROUGH, Asst Executive Director
STEVE FIGUEROA, Media/Information Services
TANYA ANDERSON, Associate Director
DON CORR, Associate Director
DARRELL LANE, Associate Director
PENNY PITTS MITCHELL, Associate Director
JAY RUSSELL, Associate Director
CARROR WRIGHT, Associate Director

HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Mr. Bruce L. Howard
Director of Publications and Communications
Director, National High School Hall of Fame

Dear Mr. Howard:

It is with confidence and enthusiasm that I nominate Takeo Spikes for the 2024 class of the National High School Hall of Fame. I have admired Takeo throughout his high school, college, and professional careers and through this nomination process my esteem for him has only grown. His athletic accomplishments at all levels speak for themselves and his character is beyond reproach.

Takeo graduated from Washington County High School and was an outstanding athlete in both football and track. He was a dominant player on a dominant team. He lettered four years in both sports and was arguably the most awarded player in Georgia. He received regional and state honors in track as a sophomore, junior and senior and was a three time all region selection, region player of the year, two time All State, Defensive Player of the Year and the Georgia Player of the Game in the Georgia-Florida All Star Game. He also earned All-American honors from Parade and USA Today.

Of course, Takeo was a national high school recruit and signed with Auburn University and continued his award-winning career. At Auburn, he was a three-year starter, two-time All SEC player, All American and the thirteenth pick of the NFL draft in 1998.

After being selected by the Cincinnati Bengals, Takeo continued to excel. He was a two-time All-Pro, Pro Bowl selection and had over 200 starts in the NFL. Only once in his 15 year NFL career did Takeo record less than 70 tackles in a season.

Spikes continues to serve his community by mentoring middle and high school students at his annual TKO Camps and numerous speaking engagements for our state's youth. By all accounts, Takeo Spikes was a great teammate and student and he continues to lead and provide inspiration to countless students in Georgia.

Thank you for your consideration for Takeo's induction into the National High School Hall of Fame and please let me know if I can provide further information to aid in his selection.

James R. Hines, Jr.
Executive Director, GHSA

Mr. Bruce L. Howard
Director of Publications and Communications
Director, National High School Hall of Fame

Dear Mr. Howard

It is my honor to nominate Takeo Spikes for the 2024 Class of National High School Hall of Fame. I had the privilege of being Takeo's High School Head Football Coach and Athletic Director. I also taught Takeo in class and observed all of his high school extra-curricular as well as his academic success.

In the classroom, Takeo followed a college prep curriculum and maintained an A - B academic average and was a regular on the school's honor roll. All of Takeo's teachers enjoyed having him in their classroom and every single one loved him dearly! I would go so far as saying Takeo was one of the most popular students in school among his academic teachers and school administrators. Takeo never had any type of disciplinary issue, in fact, he befriended students of varying backgrounds and they admired, respected, and trusted Takeo.

On the athletic field Takeo was spectacular! Takeo lettered four years straight in football and track. In track, Takeo was a multiple event participant, receiving regional and state honors in his sophomore, junior, and senior year.

In my observation, which goes beyond forty plus years, I have never witnessed a better high school football player in any classification than Takeo Spikes! Takeo was our team leader, our bell cow! Takeo was the best team leader I have ever observed!

We had some great football teams during Takeo's high school career. Many sports journalists have rated our 1994 State Championship Team as the greatest football team in Georgia History! During Takeo's final three years of high school our team record was forty-one and three, we won three Regional Championships, were State Runners-up, a State Semi-Finalist and a State Champion! In 1994 we were fifteen and zero and broke the All-Time Georgia Scoring Record with six hundred and forty-one points.

In 1994 Takeo was selected as Prep All-American, First Team All-State, State Defensive Player of the year. First Team All-Region, and Region Player of the year. Takeo was a two-way player and played on special teams. During Takeo's Senior year he led our team in tackles, scored seventeen touchdowns at tight end, blocked two punts and scored a defensive touchdown as well.

Some of Takeo's High School Football Honors were:
Prep All American 1994
All State 1993 & 1994

All Region 1992-93-94.
Selected to play in the 1994-95 Georgia – Florida All Star Game and was selected as the Georgia Player of the game!
Takeo was a national high school recruit and had offers from all over the country. Takeo chose to sign with Auburn University where he was the team leader, a three-year starter, a two time All SEC Selection, chosen to the All -American Team, and was the thirteenth pick of the 1998 NFL Draft by the Cincinnati Bengals.

Takeo Spikes is the perfect example of the great student – athlete, displaying tremendous leadership, character, academic success, athletic championship success, displaying great esprit de corps with his teammates, coaches, school and community.

I cannot imagine there being a better representative of the standards, expectations and qualifications for the National High School Hall of Fame!

With sincerest regards,

RICK M. TOMBERLIN

Coach T – Rick Tomberlin
Retired Coach & Educator.

November 18, 2023

Mr. Bruce L. Howard
Director of Publications and Communications
Director, National High School Hall of Fame

Mr. Howard:

I am writing to nominate Takeo Spikes of Washington High School in Georgia for the National High School Hall of Fame.

I am the historian for the Georgia High School Football Hall of Fame, a co-founder of the Georgia High School Football Historians Association, the editor of Georgia High School Football Daily and a sports reporter for more than 30 years with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

As historian for the Georgia High School Football Hall of Fame, I make the recommendations and research and compile the bios that lead to the ballot off which the board chooses its inductees.

I consider Spikes to be one of the 25 best high school football players in state history. A strong case could be made that he belongs in the top 10. In 2007, I wrote an article for the AJC that ranked the best 25 high school players in Georgia history. Spikes came in at No. 7. That was based entirely on his high school career and the evaluations of coaches and media who saw Spikes play and not his great accomplishments at Auburn and in the NFL.

A few things set Spikes apart to give him such as lofty ranking in such a rich high school football state.

1. Spikes was a two-way player. Contemporary newspaper articles credit him as a senior with 33 tackles for losses as a linebacker on defense and 22 touchdowns as a tight end on offense on a 15-0 team that won a championship.

2. Spikes was the best player on a great team. Washington County's 1994 Class AA champion set the all-time scoring record (since broken). It was the fourth team in history (and still one of only about six) to defeat every opponent by more than 15 points. It is arguably the most dominant "middle-sized school" champion that Georgia has ever produced.

3. Washington County was not a factor on the state level until Spikes played there. Spikes' teams were 41-3 over his final three seasons. The school had won only three playoff games over the previous three decades.

Around 2012, I did a survey of Georgia current head coaches, and one of the questions was, ''Who is the best player you've ever seen?" Spikes was the fourth-highest vote getter, and the ones ahead of him were all more recent, such as Eric Berry and Greg Reid from 2005-10. Spikes had been out of the game for more than 15 years. Said J.B. Arnold of Jefferson County: "Just dominating on both sides of the ball. Played with great intensity that he still has today." Scott Jackson of Decatur added: "He was a man amongst boys and played the game with relentless abandon."

Spikes' greatness has aged well. His character and popular continue to shine through in his TV work today.

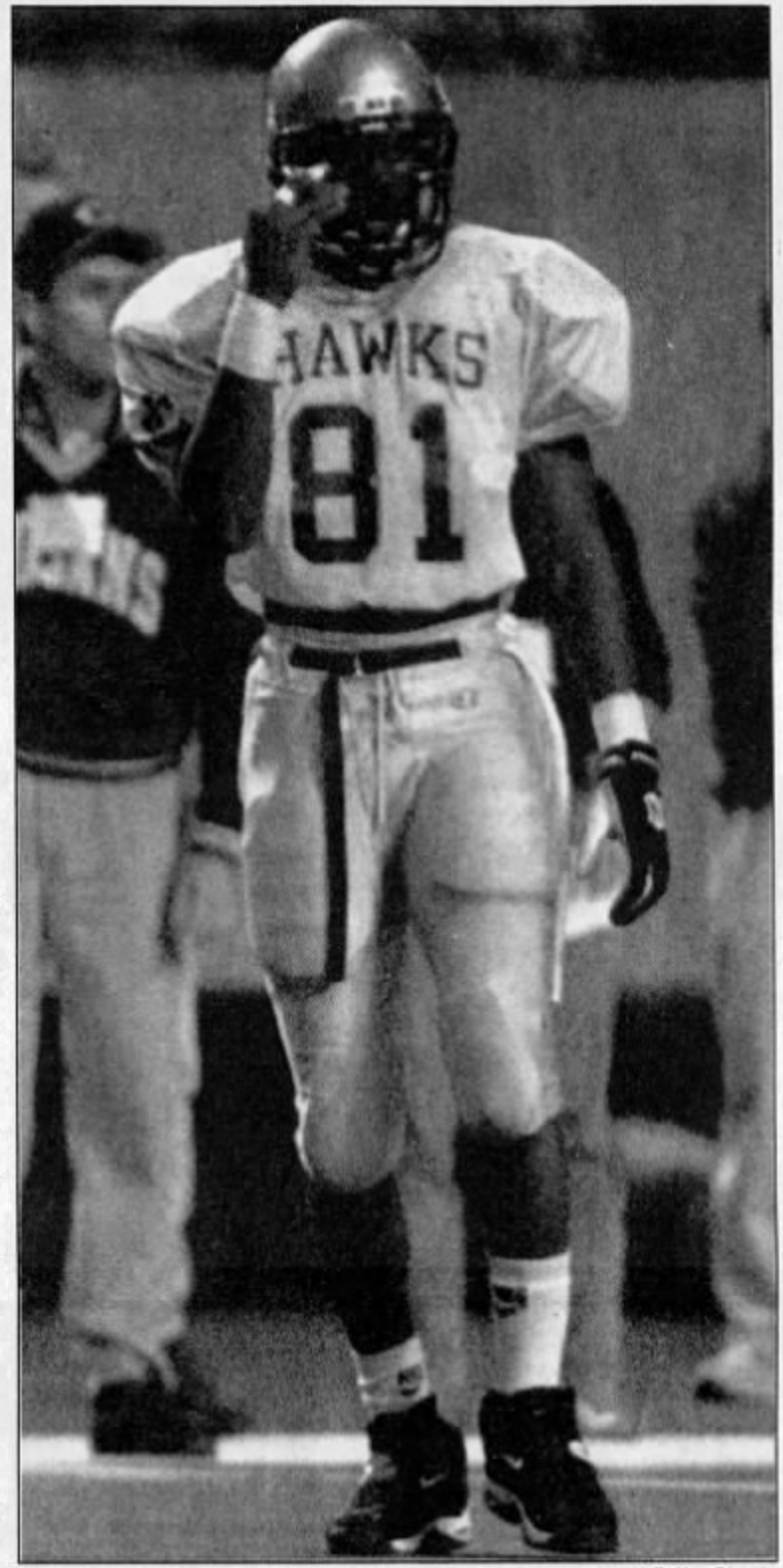
Hope that you will give Takeo Spikes the consideration he deserves. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Todd Holcomb

Todd Holcomb
AJC
GHSF Daily
Georgia High School Football Hall of Fame
Georgia High School Football Historians Association

Support Data



James Borchuck/The Macon Telegraph

Linebacker Takeo Spikes had 228 tackles for Class AA champion Washington County

Washington County won the state championship with a 15-0 record after being ranked No. 1 each week of the season. Two important parts of the Golden Hawks' title drive were tight end/linebacker Takeo Spikes and third-year coach Rick Tomberlin, who gave Sandersville a new address for Class AA football:

Title Town, Ga.

By J.J. Cooper
The Macon Telegraph

Player of the year

SANDERSVILLE — When Takeo Spikes was growing up, he was a Chicago Bears fan. What he wanted more than anything was to be Walter Payton. He could picture himself dodging potential tacklers and running over a linebacker before diving into the end zone with a winning touchdown.

But things didn't work out that way for Takeo (pronounced Ta-KEY-o). He still would love to imitate his boyhood hero, and he even got a chance in a playoff game this year to do that. Against Mary Persons, in a goal-line situation, Spikes had his only carry of the season, but he was tackled short of the end zone.

Spikes, a 6-3, 225-pound senior, spent much more time this year imitating his other boyhood idol, former Chicago All-Pro linebacker Mike Singletary.

The result was 228 tackles, 33 tackles for losses, three interceptions and two blocked punts. Spikes helpod lead Washington County to a 15-0 record and the Class AA title, earning him the 1994 Macon Telegraph Middle Georgia Player of the Year award.

Spikes did get some chances to copy Payton's running style after catching passes as a tight end. When Spikes, who has been timed at 4.5 in the 40-yard dash, turns up field, he has the ability to run around or over defensive backs. Many of his 688 receiving yards came after the catch.

"What happens is he will catch a short pass and then break three or four tackles to take it all the way," Washington County coach Rick Tomberlin said.

But he is equally intimidating to running backs and quarterbacks as he is to defensive backs. Even though most teams ran away from him, Spikes led the team in tackles by 17. His speed made him a nightmare for offensive tackles.

"To me he may be the best defensive player in the state," said Baldwin coach Bill Young, whose Class AAAA team lost to Washington County 38-0. "The way he carries out his assignments, he made us change our whole offensive approach. When he played that defensive end technique, he took our offense away. He's that type of force. He's as good a defensive player running right at him or running away from him."

As a sophomore, Spikes was a 6-1, 180 pound tight end/linebacker who had a 4.9 time in the 40-yard dash. Tomberlin brought in the Bigger-Faster-Stronger Weight Training Program and no one worked harder at it than Spikes, who hasn't missed a

Please see SPIKES, 7D ➡

Spikes provides double threat for state champion Hawks

Continued from page 1D

weight-lifting session in three years. He has twice been named the Golden Hawk Award winner, which is given to the Washington County player who works hardest in the weight room. It didn't take long for the work to pay off.

"I had wanted to go into the Army, but in my first game in Dublin (as a sophomore) I caught a pass and broke it for a 40-yard touchdown," Spikes said. "They told me I was doing good, so I decided, I'm not going into the Army."

When Spikes' friend Robert Edwards signed a scholarship with Georgia at the end of the 1992 season, Spikes realized he could earn a college scholarship in football as well.

"I never did expect that to happen in a small town like Sandersville," Spikes said.

Late in his sophomore season, Auburn sent him his first recruiting letter. Since then a flood of letters and phone calls have followed. Now, Spikes gets between eight and 10 phone calls from recruiters a day.

He has scheduled official visits with Georgia, where Edwards plays; Auburn, which sent him the first letter; Florida State, where friend and former teammate Demetro Stephens plays; and Tennessee.

Watching Edwards and then Stephens deal with the recruiting process has helped prepare Spikes.

"I was excited to see Demetro and Robert get recruited, but they told me, when the time comes you'll want to sign and get it over with," Spikes said.

They were right, while Spikes parents are still enjoying all of the phone calls, but there are days when Spikes wishes he could take the phone off the hook and relax.

"In a way I am looking forward to signing day to put all of this past me," Spikes said.

Several of his teammates are going through the same process. Quarterback George Askew, running backs Edward Swint and Andre Battle, linemen Quartez Brown, Dante Haynes and Jeremy Brett, linebackers Jimmy Dudley and Mike Parker and safety Tony Wilson are meeting with recruiters.

"That makes it a whole lot easier. We get together and talk about it," Spikes said.

There was actually a time last year when Spikes thought about giving up football. The 14-13 overtime loss in the semifinals to Mary Persons in 1993 was devastating enough that he wanted nothing to do with football.

"I didn't want to play," he said. "It seemed like all the long hours, all the time in the weight room had gone down the drain. We didn't accomplish our team goal."

Unfortunately for the rest of Class AA, running track helped to revitalize Spikes. After seeing players from other teams at track meets, Spikes decided he had something to prove in his senior year.

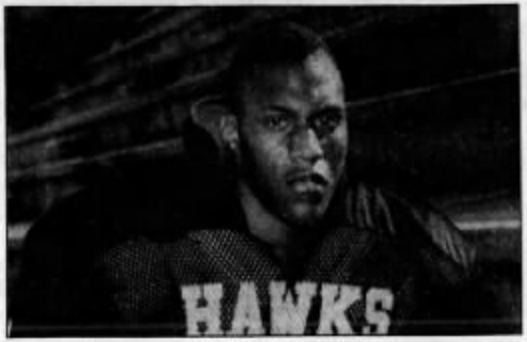
When the team buses finally finished the 90-minute drive back to Sandersville from the state championship game in Sylvania last Saturday night, Spikes was one of the first ones off the bus and onto the goalposts. A mangled upright at the "House of Pain" stands testament to the Hawks state title.

"I was the first one on it," Spikes said. "They wouldn't let us tear down the goalposts at Screven County, so we had to go home to the House of Pain. We brought it all down."

Washington County's Spikes drawing raves, recruiters

By Matt Winkeljohn
STAFF WRITER

PLAYER OF THE YEAR



RICH MAHAN / Staff

Washington County opponents lining up on either side of the ball won't miss the icy stare of Takeo Spikes next season.

It doesn't take a program to pick out Takeo Spikes on a football field, nor does anybody need to point him out in a room.

The Washington County senior linebacker-tight end will jump out at you anywhere.

The Golden Hawks (15-0) won the state Class AA title, giving up a mere 78 points, just 70 (4.7 per game) by the defense.

Spikes, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution's player of the year, had a lot to do with that. The pass-rushing outside linebacker had 181 tackles, 33 for losses, 21 sacks, two blocked punts, three interceptions, three pass deflections and two fumble recoveries.

Washington County also scored a state-record 630 points (one more than Valdosta did in 13 games in 1971). Spikes did his part, catching 40 passes for 751 yards — 22 for TDs, many when he outjumped, or outwrestled defenders for the ball. He also had 31 "pancake" blocks.

"I've never had a complete high school player like Keo," said Washington County coach Rick Tomberlin, whose team went 41-3 the last three years. "His attitude is 'You do what you have to do, and I'll be first in line, and the last to leave.' If there's a better high school player in America, I'd like to see him, and shake his hand. I'm hearing that from a lot of college coaches."

In a room full of students, Spikes stands out right away.

He's big to begin with, 6-feet-2½, 220 pounds. Factor in his chiseled features, and the icy stare that hints at his unequaled concentration, and it's easy to see why Spikes will be missed next season.

Tomberlin coached Georgia linebacker Randall Godfrey at Lowndes, and linebacker Demetro Stephens last year at Washington County before he went to Florida State.

Like Spikes, Godfrey was a USA Today first-team All-American. Stephens was second team.

"Randall and Demetro were great linebackers, but I've never had a guy contribute on offense, defense and special teams like Keo," Tomberlin says. "His concentration is so complete; he doesn't want to talk about recruiters or college visits. He just wants to talk about Screven County, or Carrollton, or Mary Persons, or whoever we're getting ready to play. He doesn't even want to read. The Macon Telegraph did a big story on him, and I cut it out, and he said, 'Give it to me after the season.'"

College recruiters have recently almost outnumbered Washington County coaches at the east-central Georgia school, scouting a dozen players.

Spikes still stands out.

He bench-presses 390 pounds, has run the 40-yard dash in 4.58 seconds and is considered one of the top prospects in the nation.

Spikes, who also runs track, will take the SAT a second time. He has better than a 3.0 grade-point average in core classes.

Selection process

All-state teams were selected by the Journal-Constitution sports staff after consulting with coaches and sportswriters around the state. Selections were made on high school accomplishments, not college potential.

Class AAAA All-State Team

Pos.	Player	School	Ht./Wt.	Yr.
QB	Jon England	Norcross	6-1, 180	Sr.
RB	Jonathan Butler	Bainbridge	6-0, 195	Sr.
RB	Greg Manson	Northside	6-1, 200	Sr.
RB	Mark Townsend	Brookwood	6-1, 185	Sr.
WR	Karsten Bailey	E.Coweta	6-2, 185	Sr.
WR	Ronald Bonner	Colquitt Co.	6-1, 170	Sr.
OL	Matt Stinchcomb	Parkview	6-7, 300	Sr.
OL	T.J. Meers	McEachern	6-6, 275	Sr.
OL	Steven Herndon	Troup	6-5, 275	Sr.
OL	Jim Niedrach	LaGrange	6-3, 260	Sr.
OL	Justin Harrell	Coffee	6-4, 240	Sr.
DL	Demarcus Hillman	Winder-Barrow	6-4, 295	Sr.
DL	Jason Jones	Redan	6-5, 300	Sr.
DL	Jerry Jones	Colquitt Co.	6-3, 245	Sr.
DL	Marcus Larry	Osborne	6-4, 232	Sr.
DL	Darius Walker	SW DeKalb	5-10, 245	Sr.
LB	Vinson Cooper	Groves	6-3, 230	Sr.
LB	Thomas Diggs	Lovejoy	6-0, 220	Sr.
LB	Jesse Tarplin	Cross Keys	6-4, 215	Sr.
DB	Larry Mans	Dunwoody	6-3, 185	Sr.

Washington County's Spikes measures up to best

By J.J. Cooper
The Macon Telegraph

Rick Tomberlin has seen plenty of talent through the years. Georgia stars Randall Godfrey, Jeff Thomas and Robert Edwards and Florida State linebacker Demetro Stephens all played high school football under him, but one current Golden Hawk may be better than all of them.

"Takeo Spikes is the best player I have coached, period," Tomberlin said. "It's hard to compare one player to another — they're like you're kids, — but he's got it all. He's a talent."

When you consider the source, that is quite a statement. Godfrey has been named first-team All-SEC; Edwards is considered the best athlete on the Bulldog team, and Stephens was considered the best high school linebacker in Georgia last season. Spikes may be better than all of them.



Takeo Spikes

"I don't worry about (the comparisons), I just play my game," Spikes said.

Askew has helped lead the top-ranked Golden Hawks to a 12-0 record. This Friday they will face their toughest test of the season as they travel to Forsyth to face undefeated Mary Persons. Last season the Bulldogs eliminated Washington County in the state semifinals 14-13 in overtime.

When comparisons are made to Tomberlin's other star players, Spikes measures up favorably.

"Randall ran people down. Demetro bloodied your nose. Takeo is a skilled blocker, pass receiver and he's tough. He has strengths in all areas," Tombelin said.

Few opposing coaches are going to argue with that. He may be the best outside linebacker in the state with his speed and size, and he also may be the best tight end in the state.

"He's as good on either side of the ball as I've seen this year," Dublin coach Sam Barrs said. "I've never seen the kid take a play off. That's the best compliment I can pay on a kid."

"He's the best player in the state," Tomberlin said.

Spikes' stats back Tomberlin up, as he has 28 catches for 578 yards and 22 touchdowns. No other tight end, or receiver in the midstate has close to that many touchdowns. Only a couple of running backs in Middle Georgia had that many points. During the two weeks of the playoffs, Spikes has five touchdowns.

He has already done one thing that none of Tomberlin's former stars did. He has twice won Tomberlin's Golden Hawk award, which

Please see SPIKES, 3C ➡

Spikes has size and speed

Continued from page 1C

is given to whoever shows the most dedication during the summer weightlifting program.

"Randall (Godfrey) never did that. I think that was the first thing I noticed — his character," Tomberlin said.

He also noticed the talent. Spikes has started all 42 games at both linebacker and tight end since Tomberlin arrived before his sophomore year. Golden Hawk quarterback George Askew, who is also a top prospect, has also started every game since Tomberlin arrived. As a result they have developed an understanding of each other's games.

"(Askew) knows where I want the ball placed and he puts it there," Spikes said.

If the Hawks are going to change their fortunes against Mary Persons, Spikes will be one of the reasons. What makes him tough to handle is his combination of size (6-3, 220) and speed (4.58 in the 40).

"He's as good a blocking tight end as we've faced," Barrs said.

He's also one of the few tight ends who is a true deep threat. This season he has caught four touchdown passes of more than 40 yards. He's averaging more than 20 yards per catch.

"What happens is he will catch a short pass and then break three or four tackles to take it all the way," Tomberlin said.

As a result, the time between now and national signing day in early February will be a busy one for Spikes. He isn't worrying about narrowing his college choices yet, as he will wait until after the football season is over to begin narrowing down his selections. But it's safe to say that he can go wherever he wants.

But that opportunity doesn't come without a price. Already he is getting a little bit tired of the phone calls from coaches.

"It's be a pretty fun to a certain extent, but not during the week when you're doing homework and you're getting three and four calls a night," Spikes said.

Spikes will probably end up at outside linebacker in college because of his pass rushing ability, which suits him perfectly, as he prefers sacking the quarterback to catching a touchdown pass.

Said Tomberlin: "I think he'll be a linebacker in college. He could play several positions and do it well. He could also play tight end or as a down lineman."

In fact, Tomberlin has always wondered what Spikes could do as a running back. But with 1,000 yard rushers in each of his three seasons at Washington County, he never has needed to find out.

Opposing coaches are pretty happy about that.

Spikes named state's top football player

By J.J. Cooper
The Macon Telegraph

Washington County linebacker Takeo Spikes is The Associated Press' Georgia High School Football Player of the Year, one of five Golden Hawks named to the Class AA All-State team.

Spikes, a 6-3, 225-pound senior, finished the season with 228 tackles, 33 tackles for losses, three interceptions and two blocked punts to lead Washington County to a 15-0 record and the Class AA championship. He added 45 catches for 688 yards and 16 touchdowns as a tight end.

"Takeo Spikes is the best player I have coached, period," Washington County coach Rick Tomberlin said.



Takeo Spikes

Spikes, The Macon Telegraph's Middle Georgia Player of the Year, was part of a defense that allowed only 57 points. In the Class AA championship game, he helped to hold the state's leading rusher, Audrell Grace of Screven County, to 59 yards rushing in Washington County's 31-7 win.

"This season turned out about the way we wanted it to turn out," Spikes said.

Spikes is the second-consecutive defensive player to win the award. Dunwoody defensive lineman Travis Stroud, now at Georgia, was the 1993 player of the year.

Washington County also had quarterback George Askew, running back Edward Swint, defensive lineman Jeremy Brett and linebacker Mike Parker on the AA All-State team.

Also joining Spikes on the Class AA team was Grace, who broke former Worth County running back Robert Toomer's state record for rushing yards as a sophomore. Grace finished the season with 2,345 yards rushing to break Toomer's record by 50 yards.

Spikes, who received his first recruiting letter when he was a sophomore at Washington County, now has at least eight calls from recruiters each night. He has scheduled official visits to Georgia, Auburn, Tennessee and Florida State.

"In a way I'm looking forward to signing day so I can put all of this past me," Spikes said. "But it only gets bad when you let it get bad. I don't let it go to my head."

Other Middle Georgia players who were selected for the team include: Greg Manson (Northside, running back); Kinte Morgan (offensive lineman, Crisp County); Nathan Dardy (defensive lineman, Dublin); Ryan Taylor (defensive back, Dublin); Patrick Horne (defensive lineman, West Laurens); Demedrick Mays (linebacker, Mary Persons); Quentin Davis (defensive back, Mary Persons); Jeston Grady

Please see STATE'S, 2C ➡

A STATE OF PLENTY

Transplanted coaches agree that Georgia's **high schools** stand apart for their brand of football and a richness of talent that makes the Peach State a premium destination for recruiters.

By TODD HOLCOMB
tholcomb@ajc.com

FROM HIGH SCHOOL PROSPECTS to college All-Americans to NFL draft picks, it can be measured at every level in Georgia, and it adds up to one thing:

The state is brimming with some of the most gifted high school football players in the nation.

"I thought the league I came from, where every team had won a state championship, was probably the best in Michigan, and I thought those were talented kids," said Irv Sigler, who came to Kell High of Marietta in 2005 after 12 seasons as a head coach in his native state. "But the football down here, the way they play it, the way they coach it, is far and above anything I've ever seen. It's night and day."

Drawn by the talent in the high schools and the passion in their communities, many top coaches are coming to Georgia to find a similar thing.

Randy McPherson at Lowndes, Blair Armstrong at Peachtree Ridge (now at Banks County), Roger Holmes at Dublin and Rich McWhorter at Charlton County are coaches who started their careers in other states but won state championships in Georgia in the past two years.

Sigler says he gets more recruiting visits from college coaches in one month than he did in full years in Michigan.

Buzz Busby, who came from Alabama and won a state title at Kendrick of Columbus in 1991, believed the coaching was better in his native state 15 years ago, partly because of the lingering influence of Bear Bryant.

Now, Busby believes Georgia leads the South because good coaches are drawn by thriving booster clubs that supplement a coach's income. That's not allowed in many states, including Florida.

The coaches also want the chance to coach some of the nation's finest players, Busby says.

"The talent here was always different," he said. "You can take the top 20 teams in Alabama, and there will be 75 teams in Georgia as good as they are."

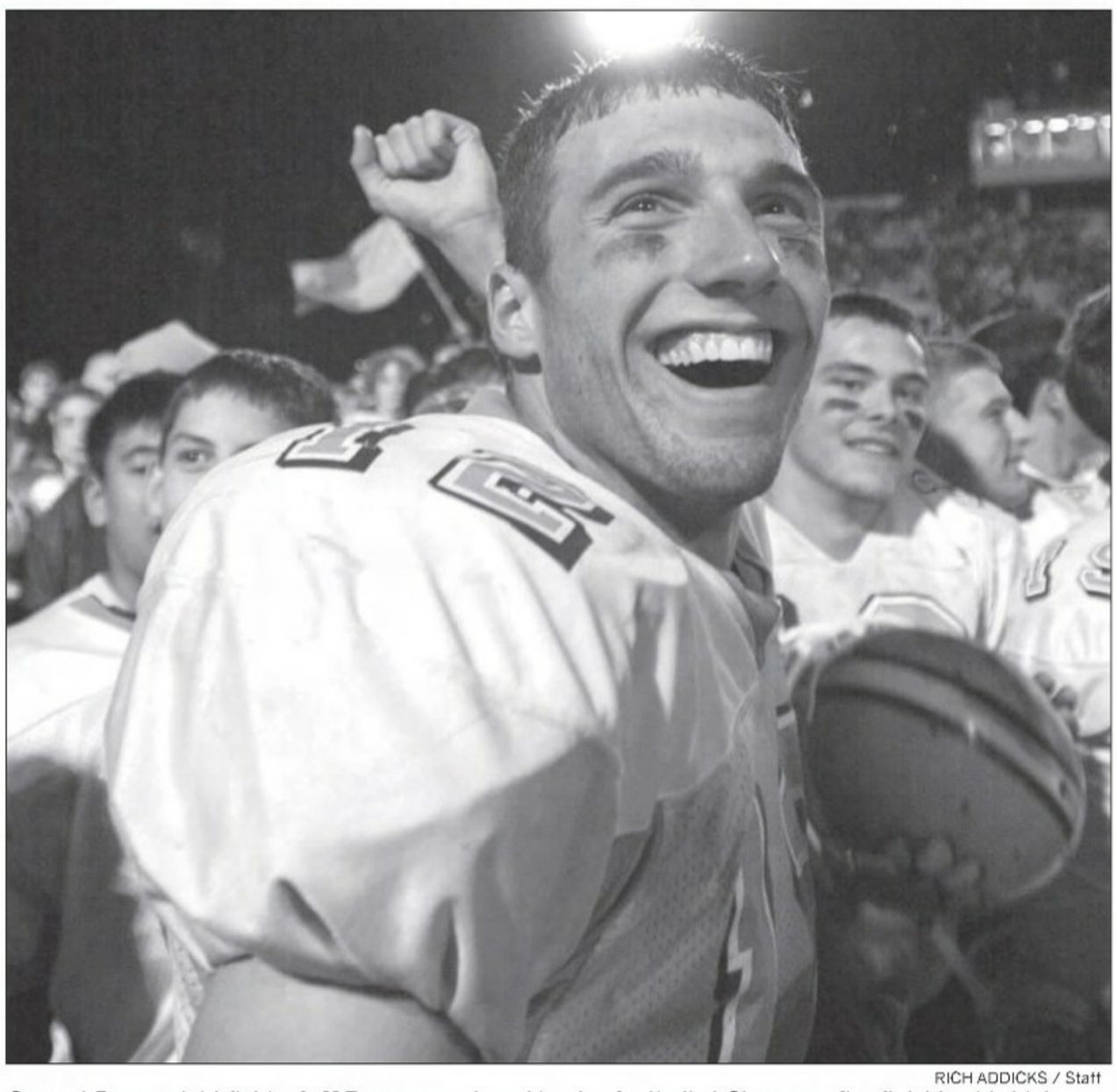
But Sigler says the heart of high school football in Georgia remains the parents, students and the fans.

"You have a sense of taking your school and your community out on the field with you that you don't have in the North," Sigler says. "In Michigan, the custodians get the field ready. Here, people can't imagine not getting fields ready for the kids and their fans.

"It's little things like that that creates the passion you have in Georgia. That's why it's so thrilling to be here."

The best

The AJC's top 25 all-time high school football players from the state of Georgia.



RICH ADDICKS / Staff

Current Braves right fielder **Jeff Francoeur** signed to play football at Clemson after finishing his high school career in 2001 with back-to-back state titles as a two-way player at Parkview.

1. Herschel Walker

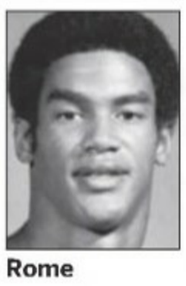
Johnson County (1979)

Walker was already the No. 1 recruit in the country before his senior season of 3,167 rushing yards and 45 touchdowns, which remained state records for more than 20 years.

2. Clint Castleberry

Boys (1941)

Boys High of Atlanta won three state titles and went 31-1-2 in Castleberry's three seasons. A year out of high school, he finished third in the Heisman voting for Georgia Tech.



Rome

3. Stan Rome

Valdosta (1973)

The 6-foot-4 Rome set a national record with 4,477 career receiving yards and had 72 receptions as a sophomore on Valdosta's national championship team in 1971.

4. Larry Kinnebrew

East Rome (1977)

Georgia's first 15-0 state champion shut out nine opponents with this monster 240-pound middle linebacker, who was also the fullback and Class AA 100-yard dash champion.

5. Charles Grant

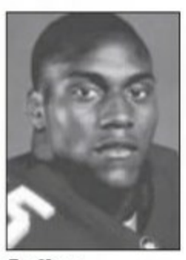
Miller County (1997)

Class A defensive player of the year in 1996, then Class A offensive player of the year in 1997. Tied Walker's state record with 45 touchdowns.

6. Garrison Hearst

Lincoln County (1989)

Hearst was the first-team all-state punter in Class A in 1989, among other things. Also the AJC's all-class player of the year, he rushed for 2,216 on his state-winning team.



Spikes

7. Takeo Spikes

Washington County (1994)

No opponent came within 15 points of beating WaCo in 1994 when Spikes was a tight end/defensive end and Parade and USA Today All-American. He was easily AJC's all-class player of the year.

8. Eric Zeier

Marietta (1990)

Threw for 2,477 yards as a senior and returned Marietta to state-power status before becoming UGA's all-time leading passer.

9. Mackel Harris

Americus (1975)

A linebacker on a hallowed defense that shut out 13 of 14 opponents, Harris also was the Class AA champ in the 100-yard dash and a feared wideout when needed.

10. James Brooks

Warner Robins (1976)

Future Auburn and Bengals standout rushed for more than 1,800 yards on a national title team whose average margin of victory was 47-7.

11. Deon Grant

Josey (1996)

USA Today All-American caught 30 passes and was a bone-crushing safety who gave Augusta its first state champion in 30 years.

12. Andre Hastings

Morrow (1989)

Sports Illustrated projected him as a future all-Pro — while he was still in high school. Hastings was a Parade and USA Today All-American.

13. Andy Johnson

Athens (1969)

Led improbable state championship team in rushing, passing, punting, kick and punt returning and interceptions. Later Georgia's quarterback for three years.

14. Larry Morris

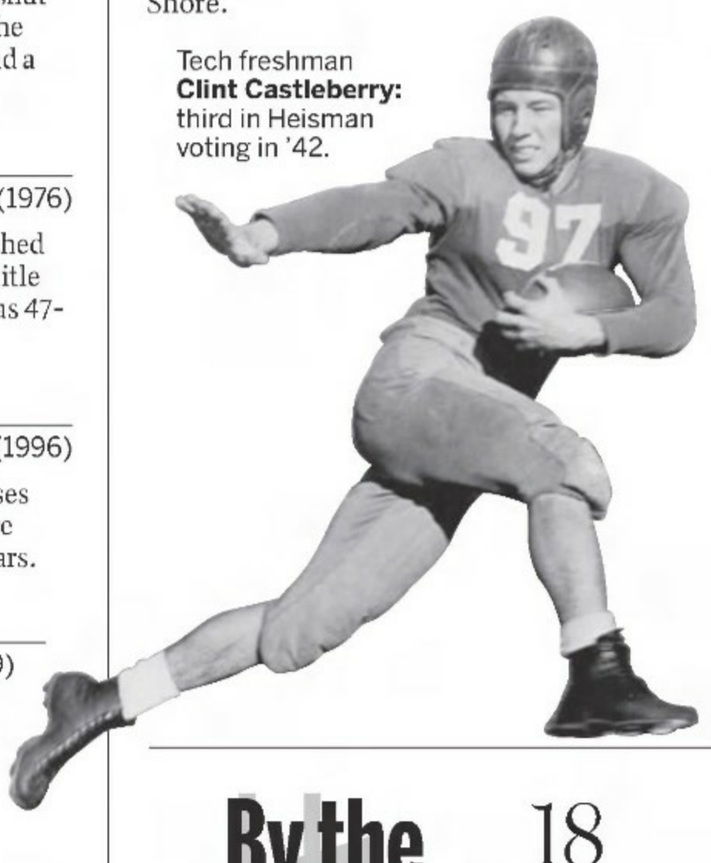
Decatur (1950)

Back of the Year for Class AA champions in 1949 and 1950, then a four-year starter on fabled Georgia Tech teams, then a star lineman in the NFL.

15. Emerson Boozer

Laney (1961)

Scored the winning touchdown in the 1961 championship game of the old Georgia Interscholastic Association. Dreamed of playing for Georgia or Georgia Tech, but segregation led him to Maryland Eastern Shore.



Tech freshman **Clint Castleberry:** third in Heisman voting in '42.

16. Ray Guy

Thomson (1968)

His 47.6 punting average as a senior would have led the NFL, but this four-sport legend also was a great quarterback, defensive back and place-kicker on back-to-back state champs.

17. Reggie Brown

Carrollton (1998)

Rated the No. 1 wide receiver prospect in the nation. Carrollton was 50-6 in Brown's four seasons.

18. Monte Williams

Commerce (2000)

Georgia's career rushing leader with 8,844 yards. The speedy Williams didn't make it in college football.

19. Champ Bailey

Charlton County (1995)

Before being a two-way player at Georgia, Bailey played quarterback, running back, linebacker and safety and helped put this Okefenokee Swamp school on the Georgia football map.

20. Charlie Dudish

Avondale (1967)

The No. 1 recruit in the country was the quarterback and biggest star of Avondale's dynasty that went 101-10-1 for the decade of the '60s.

21. Jeff Francoeur

Parkview (2001)

Caught 29 touchdown passes, intercepted 19 passes and won 30 games for Class AAAAA champions in 2000 and 2001.

22. Jeff Backus

Norcross (1997)

This AJC Super 11 and USA Today and Parade All-American was a four-year starter at Norcross before becoming a four-year starter at Michigan. Now starts in the NFL.

23. Milton Byard

Risley (1950)

Legendary runner who played in the all-black GIA before it merged into the GHSA scored 50 touchdowns in a season for his state-winning Brunswick school.

24. Darius Walker

Buford (2004)

His 46 touchdowns in a season are a GHSA record. So are Buford's 47 consecutive victories as Buford went 45-0 with Walker as its tailback.

25. William Andrews

Thomasville (1974)

Rushed for more than 1,600 yards for each of back-to-back Class AAA state champions. The '74 team was declared a national champion.

— Compiled by Todd Holcomb

By the numbers

18 Georgia high school players who are rated 4-star or higher by Rivals.com, the fourth-most among states in the nation.

44 USA Today high school All-Americans from Georgia since 1982.

28 Consensus college All-Americans from Georgia since 1982.

1 Number of black players from Georgia high schools who were taken in the first round of the NFL draft before 1979.

35 Number of black players from Georgia high schools who have been taken in the first round of the NFL draft since 1979.

830 All-time victories by Valdosta, a national record.



Matthew Stafford

Nomination Form

HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

Name of Nominee: John Matthew Stafford (Matt)
(first, middle, last)

Individual Submitting Nomination:

Name: Logan Lawrence

Phone: 512-636-2779

Street Address: 1701 Manor Rd.

City, State, Zip Code: Austin, Texas 78722

Signed: Logan Lawrence

Email: llawrence@uiltexas.org

State Association Verification? True

NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:

Athletes

Name of Nominee: John Matthew Stafford (Matt)
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: N/A
(street address)

N/A, California N/A
(city, state, zip)

Email: N/A

Phone: N/A Date of Birth: 2/7/1988

School Affiliation (if any) _____

City: _____ State: _____

Place of Birth: Tampa, Florida Date of Retirement: _____

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated? __Yes_____

If yes, please explain:
Quarterback for the Los Angeles Rams

If deceased, date of death:

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: _____

Address: , ,

Phone: _____

Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Dallas Highland Park High School	Dallas, Texas	2006	Diploma
College/University: University of Georgia	Athens, Georgia	N/A	N/A
Post Graduate School:			

Athletes

Participation/Career Description/Biography:

Matthew Stafford
HIGH SCHOOL
Dallas Highland Park (2003-05)
Dallas, Texas
Football
2003: 13-2, 3,182 yards-38 TD, District Champion, State Semifinalist
2004: 8-2, District Champion, Missed multiple games due to injury
2005: 15-0, Class 5A State Champion, 4,013 yards-38 TD, Team averaged 48 PPG, First-Team All-State, State Offensive MVP, Parade Magazine All-American, EA Sports National Player of the Year
Baseball
2004: Played catcher and caught Clayton Kershaw: Regional Semifinalist
2005: District Champions
COLLEGE
University of Georgia (2006-2008)
Athens, Georgia
2006: 1,749 yards-7 TD, 6-2 record as a starter, Chick-Fil-A Bowl MVP, SEC All-Freshman Team
2007: 2,523 yards-19 TD, 11-2 record as a starter, Sugar Bowl Champions, Final National Ranking #2
2008: 3,459 yards-25 TD, 10-3 record as a starter, Capital One Bowl MVP, Pro Football Weekly All-America
NFL
Detroit Lions (2009-2020)
-Selected 1st Round- 1st overall in 2009 NFL Draft
-Led Lions to Playoffs-2011, 2014, 2016
Los Angeles Rams (2021-)
-Led Rams to Super Bowl-2021
Career: NFL Comeback Player of the Year (2011), Pro Bowl NFC Starting QB (2014), Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Nominee (2018), holds Detroit all-time passing yards and passing TD records
Career Accolades
-Texas High School Football Hall of Fame

Contributions Athletics/NFHS/Education Philosophy:

Personal Records/Honors/Awards

Professional Achievements

Other Information

HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

Name of Nominee: Marcus Rayshon Spears
(first, middle, last)

Individual Submitting Nomination:

Name: Karen Hoyt

Phone: 2253004215

Street Address: 12720 Old Hammond Hwy

City, State, Zip Code: Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70816

Signed: Karen Hoyt

Email: khoyt@lhsaa.org

State Association Verification? True

NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:

Athletes

Name of Nominee: Marcus Rayshon Spears
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: 5802 Chamberlyne Drive
(street address)

Frisco, Texas 75034
(city, state, zip)

Email: marcus.spears@espn.com

Phone: 404-840-7653 Date of Birth: 3/8/1983

School Affiliation (if any) _____

City: Baton Rouge State: _____

Place of Birth: Baton Rouge, Louisiana Date of Retirement: _____

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated? __Yes_____

If yes, please explain:
Marcus is a NFL analyst for ESPN covering NFL news and live games.

If deceased, date of death:

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: _____

Address: , , _____

Phone: _____

Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Southern Lab	Baton Rouge, Louisiana	2001	
College/University: LSU	Baton Rouge, Louisiana	2005	
Post Graduate School:			

Athletes

Participation/Career Description/Biography:

Marcus Spears attended Baton Rouge's Southern University Laboratory School, where he excelled not only on the football field but on the basketball court as well. He finished his final prep season with 28 receptions for 435 yards and three touchdowns and 245 rushing yards and six touchdowns on offense and 22 tackles for losses, 11.5 quarterback sacks and four fumble recoveries on defense. As a senior, Spears led Southern Lab to the 1A state runner up finish in football, the 1A state title in basketball, and to a third place showing in track and field. Spears was also one of the nation's top basketball prospects. He played in the first ever U.S. Army All-American Bowl game on December 30, 2000. Spears went on to play football at LSU where he played tight end, fullback, and defensive end from 2001-2004.
Football is classified 1A - 5A. Basketball is classified C - 5A.

Contributions Athletics/NFHS/Education Philosophy:

Personal Records/Honors/Awards

Spears was named first team All-State in football on both offense and defense; the first player to be honored on both sides of the ball in Louisiana in any class since 1991. Spears hails from Baton Rouge, La, where he was a highly sought after two-sport high school athlete, recruited for both basketball and football. He played tight end, fullback and defensive end for LSU's football team under Nick Saban from 2001-04. During his sophomore year he became a full-time defensive player and his contributions to the team helped lead the Tigers to two SEC Championships titles (2001, 2003) and a win in the 2004 BCS National Championship. The 2002 season marked his first as a full-time defensive player, in which he recorded 46 tackles, 16 quarterback pressures, 3.5 tackles for losses and three sacks. In 2003, during LSU's national championship season, Spears contributed 49 tackles, 23 quarterback pressures, 13 tackles for losses, six sacks and six passes defensed to earn First-team All-SEC honors.
During his 2004 senior season, Spears put together a career year, earning first-team All-America honors from the Walter Camp Foundation, American Football Coaches Association, and AP, and second-team All-America honors from Sports Illustrated, first-team All-SEC honors, and was a semifinalist for the Bednarik Award and Lombardi Award. He finished the year tying his career-high in tackles (49) while setting career-highs for tackles for losses (17) and sacks (nine, a figure that ranks fourth in the LSU single-season records). He also recorded 21 quarterback pressures to help the Tigers finish the year third in the country in total defense.
Football: The No.1 rated tight end prospect in American listed as the No. 3 overall prospect by Superprep, a consensus All-American. Listed as an All-American by Parade Magazine, ESPN, Fox Sports, Superprep, Prepstar, The Sporting News, USA Today Dick Butkus High School All-American and Rivals.com. Strength Shoe/Louisiana Football Magazine High School Player of the Year. Touchdown Club of Atlanta-Bobby Dodd National High School Awards Program-2000 Lineman of the Year. Named 1st Team 1A All-State on both offense and defense.
Basketball: Played on Class 1A State Championship Team twice named 1A State Championship Game MVP named State Tournament MVP 2001. Twice name to 1A All State Team/Louisiana Gatorade Player of the Year 2001. Played in Nike Basketball Classic in Louisville, Kentucky 2001. Invited to Nike All-American Camp in 1999 and 2000 was ranked No. 11 Power Forward in the nation by Sporting News.
College – Louisiana State University: Played tight end, fullback and defensive end as a freshman. Earning freshman All-SEC Honors. Returned an interception 20 yards for a touchdown to give the tigers a 21-7 lead enroute to a 21-14 win over Oklahoma in the Sugar Bowl to claim the National Title. Finished LSU career with 34.5 tackles for loss, 19 sacks (fifth most in school history). Senior season earned 1st team All-American Honors from the Walter Camp Foundation and American Football Coaches Association. 1st team All-SEC.

Pro Football: Was the 20th pick in the first round of the 2005 NFL draft by the Dallas Cowboys. Earned All-Rookie Honors from Pro Football Weekly. Has been a starter since rookie season named to the Dallas Cowboys All-Decade team.

Professional Achievements

Other Information

Drafted in the first round of the 2005 NFL Draft by the Dallas Cowboys, Spears played defensive end for nine NFL seasons, retiring in 2014.

Marcus Spears is an NFL analyst for ESPN who appears daily on NFL Live. The former NFL defensive end initially joined ESPN as a college football analyst for the SEC Network in April 2014. Spears began appearing on NFL Live in 2019, which led to his new pro football-centric analyst role in June 2020. In addition to appearing on ESPN's weekday NFL news and information show, Spears is a regular contributor to Get Up, SportsCenter, First Take and other ESPN television and radio shows.

Prior to focusing on the NFL, Spears provided analysis on SEC Network's popular Saturday morning football pregame show SEC Nation alongside Tim Tebow, Paul Finebaum and host Laura Rutledge. He also launched Thinking Out Loud on SEC Network, joining Greg McElroy and Alyssa Lang for a weekly hour of SEC football banter.

Letters of Recommendation

UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE

P.O. Box 8028
Austin, Texas 78713-8028
(512) 471-5883
Theatre (512) 471-9996

November 14, 2023

To the NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee,

The Texas University Interscholastic League (UIL) submits Matthew Stafford from Dallas Highland Park High School for induction into the National High School Hall of Fame. Matthew exemplifies the character, sportsmanship, class, and integrity that we expect from high school athletes. From his high school career, through his college playing days and his professional career, he has carried himself with great talent and dignity. We believe he belongs in the National High School Hall of Fame.

Matthew led his Dallas Highland Park football team to a Texas Class 5A State Title, was the No. 1 overall pick in the 2009 NFL Draft and won a Super Bowl with the Los Angeles Rams. Undoubtedly, he has cemented himself as one of the all-time greats at the quarterback position.

During his time in high school, Stafford led Highland Park to a 28-2 record in his two-plus seasons as a starter. His senior season he guided the Scots to a State Championship with a perfect 15-0 record. Stafford was selected as the state's Offensive Most Valuable Player, *Parade Magazine* All-American, and *EA Sports* National Player of the Year.

Stafford continued that success into College Football where he led Georgia to a Sugar Bowl Victory and #2 Final ranking in 2007. He was named all-America by Pro Football Weekly his final season with the Bulldogs.

In the NFL, Stafford spent 12 seasons with the Detroit Lions and finished as the franchise's career leader in passing yards and passing touchdowns. After being traded to the Los Angeles Rams, he led the squad to a Super Bowl Title in 2021.

Throughout his career and life, he has conducted himself on and off the field in exemplary fashion. This is noted by being a finalist for the NFL Walter Payton Man of the Year award, and his many philanthropic ventures.

It is with great honor that I submit to this committee the outstanding attributes and character traits of Matthew Stafford. I believe that he deserves induction into the NFHS National High School Hall of Fame.

Respectfully,

Charles

Dr. Charles Breithaupt
Executive Director Texas UIL

UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE

P.O. Box 8028
Austin, Texas 78713-8028
(512) 471-5883
Theatre (512) 471-9996

November 14, 2023

To the NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee,

Please find attached to this email the official nomination form and supporting documents for our nomination of Matthew Stafford to the NFHS National High School Hall of Fame.

Stafford has had success at every stop in his career as a quarterback in football. He has led his teams to titles in high school, college, and the NFL. His leadership, sportsmanship and dedication to community service all make him an excellent addition to the NFHS National High School Hall of Fame.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you have pertaining to our nomination. I want to thank you and the committee for your consideration of Matthew Stafford for the NFHS National High School Hall of Fame.

Respectfully,

Logan Lawrence
Communications Specialist
University Interscholastic League (Texas)

Attachments: NFHS Hall of Fame Nomination Form
Letters of Recommendation
Photos of nominee Matthew Stafford
Support Articles and Documentation

Support Data

Matthew Stafford

HIGH SCHOOL

Dallas Highland Park (2003-05)

Dallas, Texas

Football

2003: 13-2, 3,182 yards-38 TD, District Champion, State Semifinalist
2004: 8-2, District Champion, Missed multiple games due to injury
2005: 15-0, Class 5A State Champion, 4,013 yards-38 TD, Team averaged 48 PPG, First-Team All-State, State Offensive MVP, *Parade Magazine* All-American, *EA Sports* National Player of the Year

Baseball

2004: Played catcher and caught Clayton Kershaw: Regional Semifinalist
2005: District Champions

COLLEGE

University of Georgia (2006-2008)

Athens, Georgia

2006: 1,749 yards-7 TD, 6-2 record as a starter, Chick-Fil-A Bowl MVP, SEC All-Freshman Team
2007: 2,523 yards-19 TD, 11-2 record as a starter, Sugar Bowl Champions, Final National Ranking #2
2008: 3,459 yards-25 TD, 10-3 record as a starter, Capital One Bowl MVP, Pro Football Weekly All-America

NFL

Detroit Lions (2009-2020)

-Selected 1st Round- 1st overall in 2009 NFL Draft
-Led Lions to Playoffs-2011, 2014, 2016

Los Angeles Rams (2021-)

-Led Rams to Super Bowl-2021

Career: NFL Comeback Player of the Year (2011), Pro Bowl NFC Starting QB (2014), Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Nominee (2018), holds Detroit all-time passing yards and passing TD records

Career Accolades

-Texas High School Football Hall of Fame

SPORTS

Matthew Stafford's HS Teammates Never Doubted He'd Play in the Super Bowl

The Los Angeles Rams quarterback was the "comeback king" of Highland Park's 2005 run to the Texas state championship.

By Robert O'Connell

February 9, 2022



Matthew Stafford after the Rams' win in the NFC Championship Game.
Christian Petersen/Getty

For high school quarterbacks of a certain pedigree, toughness can be theoretical. As a senior at Highland Park High School in 2005, Matthew Stafford had plenty of brawn to him—anyone could see that. His size and strength had college recruiters making repeat trips to Dallas and NFL scouts reserving draft slots: six foot two and 210 pounds, with an arm that fired ballistic spirals. His face ended in a big slab of chin, and his legs, when a defender tried to tackle him, seemed reinforced with rebar. He was the rare prep athlete whose football pads didn't make him all that much larger than he already was.

Still, even though he looked tough, the game came so naturally to him that he rarely needed to prove it. The Scots lost only two regular-season games in Stafford's three seasons as their starting quarterback; he went long stretches arcing deep shots or bull's-eyeing crossing routes before defenders could get within arm's reach of him. "They were usually winning by a lot," is what Stafford's mother, Margaret, mostly remembers about her son's high school days.

One afternoon at practice, during a drill designed to overload the offensive line and let Stafford work out of danger, a stray cleat landed on his foot. The fear of a broken bone soon passed, but Stafford had already undergone an operation on his knee over the summer, and Randy Allen, Highland Park's coach, reckoned there was no sense in putting the country's top high school prospect in harm's way, so he shelved the drill. A couple weeks later, after a pair of lackluster outings, the player walked up to the coach.

"I've got to do that drill again," Stafford said. "I've got to feel pressure."

Careful what you wish for. On Sunday, the now-34-year-old Stafford will lead the Los Angeles Rams in the Super Bowl against the Cincinnati Bengals, a reward for a decade spent facing every sort of hardship pro football has to offer: seasons ending with double-digit losses or in last-second heartbreak, a **separated shoulder**, a **broken back**. Over twelve years with the Detroit Lions, the franchise that selected him out of the University of Georgia as the first pick in the 2009 NFL Draft, Stafford played through injuries to put up sublime numbers for a cursed club. (He completed a league-best 435 passes

for nearly five thousand yards in 2012, for example—as the Lions finished 4–12 and last in their division.)

POPULAR VIDEOS

Even though Stafford is finally enjoying the perks of a championship-worthy roster, thanks to an off-season **trade** that sent him to L.A., it hasn't been a smooth ride. The Rams' divisional-round win over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers required him to go **toe-to-toe with Tom Brady** in the last pivotal moments; in the NFC title game against the San Francisco 49ers, he spearheaded the Rams' **comeback** from a ten-point deficit in the fourth quarter.

Stafford's taking the long way to the sport's peak is fitting. He is the golden-armed wunderkind turned underdog, the prodigiously gifted grinder. Former teammates and coaches who have known him all his life note two essential qualities in the quarterback: he makes it look easy, and he knows it has to be hard.

One of Stafford's oldest friends, Pan Lucas, grew up on a long, straight street, in a house next door to Allen's. It was here that Allen saw his future quarterback, then twelve or thirteen years old, throw for the first time. Playing catch, Stafford sent his friend down the block 70 yards, by Allen's

estimate, and hit Lucas in mid-stride. (The longest NFL completion this season, by air yardage, traveled 66.) “That’s pretty impressive for an eighth grader,” Allen says, chuckling the way one might when calling a thunderstorm a drizzle.

Stafford’s childhood was a montage: he starred in soccer, basketball, baseball, and football, flashing in those last two sports the sort of throwing ability Texans credit to something in the state’s soil. His time competing **alongside Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw** has been documented ad nauseam. (The popular telling is that Kershaw was Stafford’s center and Stafford Kershaw’s catcher, but Margaret says her son more often played shortstop behind his now fellow L.A. icon. “I’m out there bored to death, because nothing gets hit to me,” she says he told her when he set baseball aside early in high school.) “He was just this humble kid with a great arm,” Lucas recalls. “I thought it was normal to have friends like that. Sixth, seventh grade, we’re throwing fifty-yard bombs down the sideline, and that’s when I started to realize other teams weren’t doing that.”

His instincts might have been even rarer. Stafford’s father, John, remembers a middle-school game in which his son strayed from the coach’s play call, instead flipping a quick pass out to a receiver who made a cut and scampered to the end zone. The coach asked Stafford what he’d seen. “The cornerback’s feet were pointed inside,” a twelve-year-old Stafford replied. “There was no way he was gonna stop him.”

By the time Stafford settled in as a starter at Highland Park in his sophomore year, he and Allen had set a ritual. They’d meet during free periods and Allen would lay out checkers: eleven red ones for the offense, on Stafford’s side, and eleven black for the defense, on his own. Allen moved his pieces quickly, miming all-out blitzes or intricate combination coverages, trying to outmaneuver his quarterback. When he took his fingers off the plastic, Stafford had already mapped out the needed adjustments, a tight end dispatched to shore up protection or a receiver shuttled into an open zone.

Stafford piled up stats over runs of blowout wins, tallying 38 touchdowns and more than 4,100 yards over fifteen games as a senior. But he savored the rare

close calls. Early in his last playoff run, Stafford threw for 411 yards and four scores to bring the Scots back from a seventeen-point deficit against Texarkana, the team that had eliminated them the previous year. In the state semifinal a few weeks later, Highland Park trailed Stephenville by four points with a minute and a half left, and Stafford marched his offense the length of the field.

"We were in no-huddle; he'd run us back to the line, get the calls out there," remembers Reid Prince, Highland Park's left tackle. "It was just a smooth-running machine." Stafford's last pass of the day was a game-winning touchdown drilled past tight coverage into the chest of receiver Holt Martin. What stands out in the video of the play is the comfort with which Stafford pulls it off: a turn of the helmet, a flick of the wrist. A checker sliding across a desk. Highland Park beat Marshall 59–0 the next week for the state championship.

Ahead of the 2009 draft, some analysts speculated that Stafford might—or argued that he should—try to maneuver away from Detroit, which held the top pick. (John Elway and Eli Manning are among the big-name passers who pulled off similar power moves in the past.) The Lions were fresh off a winless season; ninety-plus years into their existence, Detroit's NFL franchise remains best known for squandering the transcendent talent of

running back **Barry Sanders**. At a predraft dinner, Troy Aikman asked Stafford whether he'd prefer to drop in the draft, whether it mattered to him to go number one. John Stafford recalls his son's response: "Yes, it does," Matthew told Aikman. "I want to go with whoever wants me."

By the standards of franchise quarterbacks, Stafford's stretch in Detroit was an unsuccessful one. The Lions racked up ten or more losses six times and made the playoffs only three times during his twelve seasons at the helm, losing on each occasion in the first round. From another vantage, though, those years were a study in resilience. In one game during his rookie season, Stafford threw five touchdowns in a 38–37 win, the last of those coming after he separated his shoulder and doctors cautioned against his returning to the field. Stafford missed the last few games of that year with a knee injury and much of the next year with shoulder troubles, but then made 136 consecutive starts before missing time again in 2019 with a fractured back. The dearth of talent around him, save for the now–Hall of Fame receiver Calvin Johnson, had the effect of isolating certain core characteristics. The Lions won 74 games with Stafford under center; in 31 of those, Stafford led **fourth-quarter comebacks**.

Stafford's trade to Los Angeles last January—one mutually and cordially pursued by the Lions and Stafford himself, once both parties agreed on the need for a fresh start—has let other traits shine through. For stretches of this season, he looked like an MVP candidate, opening the schedule with nine touchdowns and just one interception over three wins. Despite some later turbulence, such as a three-game skid at the turn of the year in which he threw seven picks, Stafford has been just what the savvy and star-studded Rams were looking for: a quarterback who can execute head coach Sean McVay's elaborate passing offense and, at key moments, expand upon it. Stafford tallied 4,886 yards and 41 touchdowns during the regular season, the third- and second-highest totals in the NFL. His teammate Cooper Kupp, a fine receiver who before 2021 had never made a Pro Bowl, set an all-time NFL record for yardage.

“We went out and got him because we thought it was a chance to be able to get a great player of his magnitude,” **McVay said** after the Rams knocked off the Niners. “He’s elevated everybody around him. He’s made me a better coach. He’s made his teammates better. He’s such a great person. . . . Love Matthew Stafford.”

Stafford’s playoff run has had the feel of a fable with a none-too-subtle moral: hardship is a gift. In the divisional round against Tampa Bay, Los Angeles built a 27–3 lead, but, Margaret says, “Against Brady, we weren’t letting ourselves get too confident.” A run of fumbles and some Brady theatrics produced a tie game late, and the Rams had the ball with 42 seconds left. It was the kind of circumstance Stafford had asked for in practices a decade and a half ago, the conditions he had thrived under in the Texas state tournament, the last-minute magic he had mastered while dragging Detroit to more wins than they deserved. “There’s nothing Matthew likes better than having the ball in his hands with a chance to win the game,” Margaret says.

Stafford connected with Kupp on a 20-yard breaking route and, on the next snap, saw his favorite target slip past the deepest defender. He lofted the ball and let Kupp run under it: 44 more yards. A field goal later, McVay was smacking Stafford’s helmet in celebration.

> BIG PLAY STAFFORD 44-YD PASS TO KUPP .. FGA COMING UP#**Rams** 27 #**Buccaneers** 27 Q4 **pic.twitter.com/Vutzah1Egj**
>
> — SPORTs 24/7⁑ (@Sports_24x7_) January 23, 2022

Stafford’s old teammate Prince was watching at home, as he did the next week when the Rams came back against San Francisco. During both games, he felt the same way he had in those 2005 Highland Park huddles: calm. “I kind of thought he’d have two or three rings by now,” Prince says. “But he’s doing what we always thought. If they leave too much time, he has the skills; he has the weapons. And he’s the comeback king.”

Matthew Stafford's high school number retired by Highland Park

By FOX 4 Staff | Published September 10, 2022 | Highland Park | FOX 4 |

HIGHLAND PARK, Texas - Highland Park High School retired the number of alum Matthew Stafford Friday night.

The Super Bowl winning quarterback was humbled.

"I just want to say this is an unbelievable night for myself, my family, hopefully for all th guys that I played with," Stafford said.

It was a packed stadium for the ceremony to retire the Highland Park Scots #7 jersey

In 2005, he led the team to a state championship and a 15-0 record.

During his 13th season in the NFL, he won his first Super Bowl with the Los Angeles Rams earlier this year.

Stafford said he's busy during football season and he hasn't been able to get back to Highland Park to watch the Scots, but the Rams played Buffalo Thursday night, so ar day Friday meant a special night for him and his family.

"Even driving up here tonight to come do this, watching everybody kind of walk to the game, the guys out there warming up before the game, just brought back a lot of memories and it was fun for my family to see that too," Stafford said. "My wife, my fou

girls, oh this is where daddy played football when he was a kid and all that, so it's a lo of fun."

4 to Watch: Highland Park to retire Matthew Stafford's number

Each week, FOX 4 Sports reporter Jeff Kolb previews four of the week's biggest high school games. This week, one of those games is the Lake Highlands vs. Highland Pa game. Former Highland Park star quarterback turned Super Bowl champion, Matthew Stafford, will have his high school jersey retired during halftime.

RELATED: North Texas High School Football 2022 Week 3 Highlights

Stafford has tied Drew Brees by reaching 50,000 passing yards the fastest, doing it in 183 games.

Only 11 other QBs have reached that milestone.

The Scots ended up beating Lake Highlands 52-14.

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Stafford stays cool under pressure



Jon Mahoney, ESPNHS.com
Oct 13, 2009, 12:51 PM ET

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Editor's Note: This story first appeared in the October 2005 Dallas-Fort Worth issue, 3 1/2 years before the Detroit Lions took Stafford with the No. 1 pick of the 2009 NFL Draft

Some quarterbacks just have "it" -- the poise and composure to lead their teams to victory, no matter what the situation. Sure, a strong arm and speed are nice, but having "it" puts you on a whole other level.


SCOTS
7

At Highland Park, Matthew Stafford modeled his game after the legendary John Elways. Vernon Bryant\ESPN RISE

Joe Montana, John Elway and Tom Brady can all be placed in that category. And these days, on the high school level, so can Highland Park (Dallas, Texas) senior quarterback Matthew Stafford, whose favorite player is, fittingly, Elway.

Stafford's ability to lead under pressure, along with his considerable physical talents, are the main reasons why the 6-foot-3, 220-pounder is rated the nation's No. 1 signal caller and No. 10 overall recruit.

Highland Park head coach Randy Allen first got a glimpse of those skills back during Stafford's freshman season. Allen, who is in his seventh year coaching the Scots and 32nd year of coaching overall, put Stafford in the game late during a blowout first-round playoff victory over Sulphur Springs.

During his tenure at Highland Park, Allen usually had a junior quarterback waiting in the wings to take over the following season. But this time, Stafford, who started for the freshman team, was going to be the varsity starter his sophomore year. And that playoff game was Allen's chance to see if Stafford had the goods.

"We only got him in for three plays against Sulphur Springs," says Allen. "He threw it very hard, and you could tell he had some talent. We knew he was going to be the quarterback for the next year, so we wanted to get him some game experience."

Although it was only three plays, that little bit of playing time -- along with some practice experience with the varsity -- did wonders for his confidence.

"It was awesome," says Stafford, who has committed to play his college football at Georgia, where his sister, Page, is currently a freshman. "It was just a good experience. Just going through practice made me feel comfortable for the next year. Even just that little playing time helped me understand the speed of the game, and it slowed things down."

Heading into his sophomore campaign, Stafford felt like he was comfortable running the show for the varsity and was ready to have a big year. But describing his sophomore season as simply "big" would be like saying Terrell Owens sometimes likes to talk.

Exploding onto the scene, Stafford put up monster numbers that even Peyton Manning would be proud of. The sophomore gunslinger completed 173-of-307 passes (56.4 percent) for 3,182 yards, 38 touchdowns and just five interceptions while leading Highland Park to a 13-2 record and the District 12-4A title.

The stats were incredible, but it was the poise and leadership he showed in the pocket that opened many people's eyes. Those traits were especially evident in the Class 4A regional semifinals against Ennis, which was led by quarterback Graham Harrell.

Harrell, who's now at Texas Tech, wasn't any ordinary high school signal caller. He broke the state record for career touchdown passes with 167 and earned a reputation for being a big-game quarterback. With Harrell's impressive resume, no one would have faulted Stafford if he wilted under the pressure.

But Stafford was unfazed and even outplayed Harrell, passing for 403 yards and three touchdowns to lead the Scots to a 38-28 win.

"He had played good in other games," says Allen. "But this was just a game where he made good decisions and showed a strong arm in a real pressure situation."

"We had a good game plan and a really good team around me," adds Stafford. "I tried not to lose the game. For some reason, I really don't get nervous in those situations."

That isn't the only time Stafford has come up big in the clutch. After defeating Ennis in the regional semifinals, Stafford led Highland Park on a two-minute drive toward the end of the game for the winning score against Kilgore in the regional finals, sending the Scots to the state semifinals, where they ultimately lost to Denton Ryan.

Then last season, Highland Park was staring at 4th-and-goal from the 10-yard line and trailing Wylie, 34-28, in a game for the district title. Only 45 seconds remained on the clock, and failure to score would end the game.

Stafford took the snap and was flushed out to the left by the oncoming pass rush. He kept his composure, however, and threw a perfect pass across the field, finding Holt Martin in the back of the end zone to tie the game. The ensuing extra point then gave the Scots a 35-34 victory and the district crown.

"The play didn't work as it was designed," says Allen. "He had to create something, and he made a throw that I think no other high school quarterback could make. I haven't seen anyone make those throws."

The game proved once again that Stafford has ice water in his veins, but it ended up being a bright spot in a tough season. Stafford still put up good numbers (1,748 yards and 18 touchdown passes in 10 games), but the Scots were bounced by Texarkana in the first round of the playoffs.

"My junior year was pretty frustrating," says Stafford. "Teams were using three-man lines and dropping eight back into coverage. We had a good enough team to go further, but we lost in the first round."

Since then, Stafford has been an animal in the weight room to make sure his senior season ends on a high note. He worked four days a week with a personal trainer over the summer, and he also eliminated any recruiting distractions in May when he committed to Georgia over Florida State, Michigan, Oklahoma and Texas.

Stafford's hard work this past summer has paid off in the eyes of Allen, who believes Stafford looks even better this fall.
"The strength of his arm is what sets him apart," says Allen. "He's very strong and has a quick release. He's really developing as a quarterback right now in terms of not just relying on his arm."

Add that to his unwavering confidence in pressure situations and you're looking at one scary quarterback for opponents to deal with.

"He's got a background of enjoying clutch situations and having the confidence that he can bring his team to victory," says Allen.
Something Stafford hopes to do even more of this season.

Jon Mahoney covers high school sports for ESPN RISE Magazine.

Texas High School Football Hall of Fame Inductees: Matthew Stafford



MATTHEW STAFFORD

Highland Park

Matthew Stafford started as quarterback for the Highland Park Scots his sophomore, junior and senior years under Coach Randy Allen. During those three seasons, he threw for 9,000 yards and 94 touchdowns, leading the 2005 Band of Brothers to a 15-0 record and the first State Championship in 48 years for the Highland Park Scots. In his senior season he threw for 4,000 yards and 38 touchdowns. Stafford's high school awards and accolades include: QB 2005 5A All-State Champions, 2005 5A All-State QB, All-State Team 4A Offensive Player of the Year, and First Team Offense. He was named to the Parade (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parade_(magazine)) All-America Team, the USA Today (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USA_Today) Preseason Super 25 in 2005, won the MVP and Best Arm awards at the 2005 EA Sports (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EA_Sports) Elite 11 Quarterback Camp (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ESPN_RISE_Elite_11) and was named the 2005 EA Sports National Player of the Year. Regarded as a five-star recruit by Rivals.com (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rivals.com), Stafford was listed as the No. 1 pro-style quarterback prospect in the class of 2006. Other awards include: Chevrolet Team Player of the Year, Gatorade Texas Player of the Year, All State (AP) First Team Offense, All Area – Offensive Player of the Year, All District – Most Valuable Player of the Year, Texas Sports Writer Assoc.

Stafford went on to star at the University of Georgia, where he threw for 7,731 yards and 51 touchdowns in three seasons. He was the No. 1 pick in the 2009 NFL Draft, chosen by the Detroit Lions, where he played for 12 seasons. Traded to the Los Angeles Rams in 2021, Stafford led the Rams to victory in the Super Bowl LVI Championship. Entering his 15th NFL season, Stafford has passed for more than 52,000 yards and 333 touchdowns.

Matthew and his wife Kelly live in California with their four daughters, Chandler, Sawyer, Hunter and Tyler.

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Texas High School Football Hall of Fame: Highland Park set Stafford on successful path

From the Texas High School Football Hall of Fame Class of 2023 series

Brice Cherry
May 5, 2023



Matthew Stafford, who led Highland Park to a state championship as a senior before going on to success in college and the NFL, will be inducted into the Te High School Football Hall of Fame on Saturday.
Steve Slate, Texas HS Football Hall of Fame

Brice Cherry

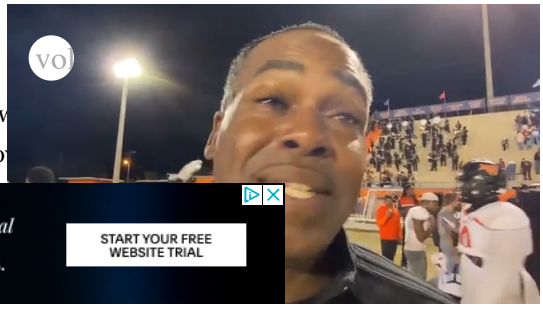
Each level of football is unique in its own way. High school is not completely like college, and the college game differs greatly from the NFL.

Matthew Stafford has experienced it all, and some of his fondest football memories can be traced to his days flinging the pigskin around for Highland Park.

Stafford, 35, will be inducted into the Texas High School Football Hall of Fame on Saturday in the nine-member Class of 2023. The Super Bowl-winning quarterback of the Los Angeles Rams considers those Highland Park memories precious. What made that time unique is that he didn't just go back with those guys, he went way, way back.

We're talking pool parties, sleepovers and backyard barbecues.

"To me, it was just the relationships you have," Stafford said. "I grew ended up playing high school football with. I know their moms, kno br tra sc

Lake Wales wins 25th straight Florida high school football ... close


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Stafford was born in Tampa, Fla., but his family moved to Texas when he was 3 years old, so being a Texan is really all he ever remembers.

He and his buddies dreamed of growing up and becoming high school football stars for the Highland Park Scots, one of the state's most successful all-time programs. They ended up living out that dream in the richest of ways. As a senior in 2005, Stafford passed for 4,000 yards and 38 touchdown passes, as the Scots went 15-0 and captured the Class 4A Div. I state championship.

There's not much better than winning state with your friends, Stafford said.

"It's way up there for sure," he said. "As much as I remember the games we played and stuff like that, the experiences with teammates and coaches, high school football is a really unique experience, especially at Highland Park. You're kind of going to school with the same people for a long, long time, and to get the opportunity to go out there and play football with them for a bunch of years and then to be able to culminate that our senior season with a state championship was a real special experience. A lot of memories along the way."

One of Stafford's high school friends was Clayton Kershaw, now a three-time Cy Young Award-winning pitcher for the Los Angeles Dodgers. Stafford even acted as Kershaw's occasional battery mate during his youth.

So, what's tougher — standing in the pocket amid an oncoming NFL pass rush, or catching a Kershaw fastball?

"Oh, standing in the pocket for sure," Stafford said. "At least I knew where Kershaw's fastball was going, I have no idea where it's coming from when it comes to a pass rush."

After his heroics at Highland Park, Stafford was ranked as a five-star prospect and he had his choice of college destinations. He ended up signing with Georgia, where his father John attended grad school years before. Stafford started as a true freshman for the Bulldogs, and ended up throwing for 51 touchdowns in three seasons before opting to forgo his senior year and enter the NFL Draft in 2009. He left with a 3-0 record in bowl games and a 6-3 record in rivalry games against Florida, Auburn and Georgia Tech.

Lake Wales wins 25th straight Florida high school football ... close

Georgia remains a special place to Stafford, and he has definitely en
Bulldogs these past couple of seasons as they've claimed consecutive

"It's been pretty incredible," Stafford said. "What Kirby (Smart) has
been really great. I feel like they've got a good thing going, and looki
ahead."

With his elite arm strength and his experience playing at top-flight high school and college programs, Stafford was viewed as a can't-miss prospect entering the draft. The Detroit Lions took him with the No. 1 overall pick, and he became the face of that franchise, spending 12 seasons in Motown.

Asked if he believes his time at Highland Park prepared him well for what he faced ahead at Georgia and in the NFL, Stafford didn't hesitate.

"The competition is as good as it gets," he said. "There are great players in the state, obviously, and I think even more so great programs. From the coaches and the schools, it's an important thing for a lot of the schools out there. They invest in it with their coaching staffs and their facilities, and the support they give the players, it's not like that in every state. I was lucky to grow up in a state like Texas where they're doing everything they can to try to support us as student-athletes, and that was fun."

Stafford experienced his share of highs and lows during his time leading the Lions. He missed all but three games in his second season due to a shoulder injury. But he returned with a bang the next year in 2011, becoming the third NFL quarterback to pass for 5,000 yards in a season while winning the league's Comeback Player of the Year honor.

Following the 2020 season, the Lions traded Stafford to the Rams in a blockbuster deal. It worked out pretty nicely for both Stafford and his new team, as the QB scripted a Hollywood ending to his first season in Los Angeles. He threw for 41 touchdowns in leading the Rams to a 12-win regular season. Better yet, he piloted L.A. to a 4-0 run through the playoffs, including a 23-20 win over the Cincinnati Bengals in Super Bowl LVI.

"It's been an unbelievable ride," Stafford said. "Coming up on Year 15 now, it's crazy to look back on it every once in a while and think about all the time and the teammates and games and experiences that I've had, it's pretty incredible, honestly. I loved my time in Detroit, my 12 years there, and then my first year here, being able to win a Super Bowl with a great group of guys. Being able to experience that was something I'll never forget and still working to try to do it again."

His old buddy Kershaw cheered him on at that game, as Stafford and the Rams were able to celebrate in front of their home fans at SoFi Stadium.

"Clayton was obviously a special guy to go to school with and grow up with," Stafford said. "I've always kept up with him. I was a baseball player and a fan growing up, and I think he loves football as well. So it's been fun to watch his career from afar, how dominant he's been. It's been really impressive. I was so happy for him to get a World Series ring (in 2020) and I'm definitely excited to have won a Super Bowl, and it's kind of fun doing it in the same city."

Stafford was able to play only nine games in the 2022 season due to multiple injuries, including two concussions and a spinal cord contusion. But he said he feels re
2023 season. Even after 15 years and more than 52,000 passing yar
still has more gas in the tank.

Lake Wales wins 25th straight Florida high school football ... close

"It's been good. Never going to be perfect," he said. "I've played 15 y
that'll take a toll on you. But I'm excited about some of the new piec
the guys that we've got returning. Obviously it's a blessing to be able
do it at a high level, and I'm looking forward to the opportunity to d

Stafford said he still keeps up with several of his Highland Park pals. One of his high school friends was the best man at his wedding. Those guys are teammates for life.

Some bonds never break.

“When you’re in college, I was the only guy from Texas on my college team for a long time, and then in the NFL you get new teammates every week,” Stafford said. “So you get to know some of the guys who stick around for a long time, but that doesn’t happen very often. So, just the relationships that you get to build over time with kids, from elementary to middle to high school, is a special part of playing high school football.”

Lake Wales wins 25th straight Florida high school football game

TEXAS HS FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

This is the ninth and final story in a series of profiles on the 2023 induction class to the Texas High School Football Hall of Fame, who will be enshrined Saturday. A live stream of the banquet, beginning at 6 p.m. from the Texas Sports Hall of Fame, will be available at www.texanlive.com.

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10 updates

Lake Wales wins 25th straight Florida high school football ... close


WILSON
THE DUKE

Tyrone Wheatley

Nomination Form

HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

Name of Nominee: Tyrone Anthony Wheatley
(first, middle, last)

Individual Submitting Nomination:

Name: Geoffrey Kimmerly - MHSAA

Phone: 5173325046

Street Address: 1661 Ramblewood Drive

City, State, Zip Code: East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Signed: Geoffrey Kimmerly - MHSAA

Email: geoff@mhsaa.com

State Association Verification? True

NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:

Athletes

Name of Nominee: Tyrone Anthony Wheatley
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: 4356 Hickory Ridge Court
(street address)

Plymouth, Michigan 48170
(city, state, zip)

Email: _____

Phone: 5109675744 Date of Birth: 1/19/1972

School Affiliation (if any) _____

City: _____ State: _____

Place of Birth: , Michigan Date of Retirement: _____

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated? __No_____

If yes, please explain:

If deceased, date of death:

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: _____

Address: , , _____

Phone: _____

Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Dearborn Heights Robichaud	Dearborn, Michigan	1991	
College/University: University of Michigan	Ann Arbor, Michigan	2008	kinesiology
Post Graduate School:			

Athletes

Participation/Career Description/Biography:

Football: Over three varsity seasons ran for a combined 4,257 yards and 67 TDs, including 2,010 yards and 33 touchdowns on 208 carries as a senior in 1990 -- the latter despite playing quarterback half of that season (and throwing for five TDs). He played quarterback, running back, defensive back, punter, kicker and returned kicks, and he scored 252 points over 13 games as a senior and 484 over 38 career games. Led Robichaud to its only football state championship, in Class B (4 classes, second-largest schools) in 1990, when he ran for 168 yards and 3 TDs, kicked three extra points, punted and made 13 tackles in the title game. During his team's regular-season finale that fall, he ran for a school-record 344 yards and 5 TDs on 18 carries, with a sixth TD on a 62-yard interception return.

Basketball: Averaged 14 points and 16 rebounds per game as a senior in earning all-Metro Detroit honorable mention from the Detroit Free Press -- when the first team included future NBA standouts Chris Webber, Jalen Rose and Voshon Lenard. He had averaged 18 ppg as a junior.

Track & Field: Won nine MHSAA Finals individual championships over his final three seasons, including an unprecedented four titles as a junior in 1990; he was the first (and remains one of only two) to do so in a Lower Peninsula Final, and he scored 40 of his team's 49 points in winning the Class B championship (4 classes, second-largest schools) that season. The four individual titles were in the 100 meters, 200 meters, 110-meter hurdles and long jump. His meet records of 13.7 seconds in the 100 at the 1991 LP Class B Final and 23-10.75 in long jump in 1989 still stood when the four-Class format was retired after the 1999 season. He also won the 100 three times at the prestigious Mansfield Relays in Ohio, among several similar accomplishments.

Contributions Athletics/NFHS/Education Philosophy:

Personal Records/Honors/Awards

Named as the top high school athlete in Michigan high school history by State Champs! Sports Network (as selected by longtime Detroit News sportswriter Tom Markowski) and considered the top high school athlete covered over the 50-year career by Detroit Free Press sportswriter Mick McCabe.

Named to Michigan Sports Hall of Fame in 2013.

Football: Named consensus all-stater (AP, Detroit Free Press, Detroit News) as a defensive back as a junior in 1989 and running back as a senior in 1990. Named to the Parade All-America team as a defensive back in 1990. Selected as the state's No. 1 "Blue Chip" college prospect in 1991 by both the Detroit Free Press and Detroit News.

Basketball: Earned all-league recognition and all-Metro Detroit honorable mention.

Track & Field: His MHSAA championships came three times in the long jump, three times in the 100, two times in the 110 hurdles and once in the 200. His performances were among the best all-time in state history (and remain so), and he ran among the nation's fastest high school sprinters as a senior in 1991.

Professional Achievements

Other Information

The stories are things of legend ... he won the hurdles state championship two months after teaching himself the event ... he ran so fast at the 1991 state meet that he caused a timing system malfunction because he was so far out in front ... he could dunk from the free throw line ... he started his first football game as a freshman at quarterback, but moved to tailback and scored an 85-yard touchdown on his first carry.

Wheatley went on to run for 4,187 yards and score 53 total touchdowns at Michigan, and he was a Big Ten outdoor champion and All-American in track while earning three letters.

Wheatley was drafted in the first round of the 1995 NFL Draft by the New York Giants and played 10 seasons, concluding his playing career with the Oakland Raiders.
He returned to Robichaud as its varsity coach in 2007 and led that team to a 9-2 record -- after the team finished 0-9 the previous season, and as the team went on to finish 0-9 the following season after he'd left. That 2007 team made the MHSAA Playoffs for the first time since 1994.
Wheatley served as an assistant football coach at four college programs including U-M and Syracuse and with the Buffalo Bills, Jacksonville Jaguars and Denver Broncos. He served as Morgan State University's head coach from 2019-21 and just completed his first season as head coach at Division II Wayne State University.

Letters of Recommendation

michigan high school athletic association

1661 Ramblewood Drive
East Lansing, MI 48823-7392
Phone: 517/332-5046
Fax: 517/332-4071

November 10, 2023

Mr. Bruce L. Howard
Director of Publications and Communications
National Federation of State High School Associations

Dear Bruce:

I am pleased to write on behalf of Tyrone Wheatley in support of his nomination to the National High School Hall of Fame.

Outside of the state of Michigan, Tyrone Wheatley is best known for his accomplishments on the football field – indeed, he was a fine player for Dearborn Heights Robichaud, leading his team to a state championship in 1990 and earning a Parade All-America honor before starring at University of Michigan and then playing 10 seasons in the NFL. On his football achievements alone, he is a candidate for the Hall of Fame – not to mention he was an all-Metro Detroit selection in basketball as well, which has been all but forgotten three decades later.

However, the legend of Tyrone Wheatley in our state is based on his accomplishments in track & field, especially as a junior in 1990. While the well-told story that he single-handedly won a team state championship that spring isn't accurate – Robichaud needed two more top-eight finishes to clinch – he did score 40 of his team's 49 points that day in the most dominant performance in our state's championship history in that sport. That afternoon, Wheatley became the first (of only two) athletes to win four individual events at an MHSAA Lower Peninsula Finals, taking first in the 100 and 200-meter dashes, 110-meter high hurdles and long jump. (Michigan's four Lower Peninsula championship meets include 92 percent of the state's schools, making this on par with a statewide accomplishment.)

Wheatley completed his high school career in 1991 with three more Class B individual track & field championships and nine total over his final three seasons. Interestingly, neither of his MHSAA Finals records for his division were achieved during his four-championship meet in 1990; he set the Class B Finals long jump record in 1989 and the 110 hurdles record in 1991, and those still stood when those classifications were retired after the 1999 season.

Michigan has produced nearly 50 Olympians in track & field alone, and our state's longest-tenured sportswriter – who also is writing a letter of recommendation for this nomination – has called Tyrone Wheatley the "greatest athlete" he's covered during a career spanning more than 50 years. Surely this Michigan great has earned a place in the National High School Hall of Fame as well.

Sincerely,

Mark Uyl
Executive Director

November 12, 2023

To whom it may concern:

I am honored to nominate Tyrone Wheatley to the National High School Hall of Fame. As a multi-sport athlete at Robichaud High School in Dearborn Heights, Michigan, Wheatley might be better known in football. But in the sport of track & field, his achievements were legendary. He regularly competed in four events—the 100, 200, 110 hurdles and long jump—and mastered them all to become one of the best in the nation in each.

As a sophomore in 1989, he broke a state finals long jump record that had stood for 17 years when he leaped 23-10.75. That same meet he also tied the Class B meet record in the 100-meters at 10.5 (hand-timed).

His junior year, 1990, Wheatley became the first Michigan athlete in 38 years to win four individual titles at the state finals. He battled strong headwinds in winning the 110 highs (14.85) and the 100 (10.8 hand). He further added the 200 (21.9 hand), and capped his momentous day by barely missing his own long jump record with a 23-10. He scored 40 of his team's 49 points to capture the team trophy.

During his senior year (1991), he showed his multi-sport versatility in his very first meet. The night after his team was eliminated in the early rounds of the state basketball tournament, he ran an indoor 55-meter dash and finished second in a state record 6.28, missing the win by just a thousandth of a second in what was at that point the fastest race in the nation that year.

Moving outdoors, Wheatley became the only athlete to win the 100 three times at the prestigious Mansfield Relays in Ohio. He did that in addition to winning the 110 hurdles in 13.87 and taking second in the long jump all within a span of an hour. He came back later and captured the 200 in 21.63. At his regional meet, he again won all four of his events, highlighting the day by long jumping 24-7, at the time the longest leap ever in MHSAA competition.

Expected to again win all four at the Class B Finals that year, he came close before being foiled by an injury. He jumped once in the long jump but won for the third straight year at 23-0. Then he successfully defended his hurdle title, but was victim of a timing snafu. According to meet referee Blake Hageman: "Wheatley was so far out in front it caused the timing device to malfunction. All the runners were in the picture but him." He was given a hand time of 13.7, a mark that surpassed the state record. Then he won his third straight 100 in 10.67, but halfway through he pulled his hamstring and crossed the line injured. That ended his hopes of competing in the 200 final and repeating his record 4 wins.

His career tally of 9 individual MHSAA final titles matched the most ever won, marking him as one of the sport's legends. However, in interviews after his final prep meet, he said he just wanted to be remembered as a "nice person."

Had he specialized in the sport of track & field, as many athletes do today, there is no doubt that Wheatley would have made an even bigger impact on the record books. Instead, he represented the ideal of the multi-sport athlete, and left a legacy that has been an inspiration for the many student-athletes who have attempted to follow in his footsteps.

Jeff Hollobaugh
President, Michtrack
A non-profit organization dedicated to the history of track & field in Michigan

To Whom It May Concern:

I began covering high school athletics for the Free Press in 1970 so over the last 50-plus years I have covered every high-level athlete in the state.

Earvin (Magic) Johnson, Derek Jeter, Dathan Ritzenhein, Dena Head, Jerome Bettis, Shane Battier, Antonio Gates, Jalen Rose, Charles Rogers, Rickea Jackson, Dan Majerle . . . I could go on and one. I've seen them all.

But of all of the great athletes Michigan has produced over the last 50 years, one stands above the rest: Tyrone Wheatley.

Tyrone is best known for his exploits as a football player and justifiably so. As a senior at Dearborn Heights Robichaud he literally carried his team to a state championship.

Travel to the small town of Kingsford in the state's Upper Peninsula and you will find that they are still talking about his two-way performance against the Flivvers (you have to love that nickname) to give Robichaud the state title.

The state has had a tremendous amount of standout football players, but Tyrone was also an excellent basketball player. He was a 15-point,10-rebound guy every night and you couldn't find a seat at a game because of the expectation of what he might do.

In one game, Tyrone was driving to the basket and took off one step inside the free throw line and threw down a thundering dunk.

I happened to look at the official under the basket and his whistle tumbled out of his mouth as he looked on in amazement. I guess it was a literal jaw-dropping moment.

Then came track season and a case could be made that it was Tyrone's best sport. I truly believe that had he given up football and concentrated on track he could have become an Olympic sprinter, hurdler or long jumper . . . or decathlete.

In his senior year he won the state title for Robichaud by winning the 110-meter high hurdles, the 100-meter dash, the 200-meter dash and the long jump (by over two feet).

That was quite a career, but I think the separates Tyrone from many of the other athletes is the man he has become.

Before his senior football season I went home with after a practice. He and his siblings were living in a small house with his aunt and uncle and their kids. He was there because his father had been murdered and his mother was a junkie.

When we arrived he said he would be with me in a couple of minutes because he had to do the dishes, one of his daily chores.

His neighborhood was filled with gangs and a lot of drug activity. The gangs and drug dealers would have loved to have gotten Tyrone to go with them, but he refused.

I left the house that day thinking this was a kid who could go one of two ways. He could fall in with a gang or a drug dealer or he could stay on the path to becoming an amazing athlete. I had a feeling he was going to turn out to be just fine.

We all know which way he went.

Tyrone is now the head coach at Wayne State in Detroit. Just before he was hired, a former Wayne State player who had left the team at the start of the previous season committed suicide.

Despite never meeting the young man and not even knowing the names of all of his players yet, Tyrone rented a bus and took them to the hometown of the young man, over two hours away, for the funeral because he could tell his players were hurting.

Add all of that together and I think you've got someone worthy of your Hall of Fame.

Mick McCabe

Detroit Free Press

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HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Why Tyrone Wheatley is the greatest athlete Mick McCabe has covered in 50 years

Mick McCabe Special to the Detroit Free Press

Published 3:07 p.m. ET July 28, 2020

The question comes with greater frequency now than it did before.

Especially now, as I put the finishing touches on the upcoming book: “Mick McCabe’s Golden Yearbook: 50 Great Years of Michigan’s Best High School Players, Teams & Memories," people want to know who was the best athlete I’ve covered since I began at the Free Press on June 3, 1970?

Easy question (“Love Actually” reference).

Tyrone Wheatley is, was and forever will be the best athlete I’ve covered. Case closed.

The former Dearborn Heights Robichaud star was an amazing three-sport athlete, earning all-state honors in football, basketball and track and field.

Jim Paciorek, who was an all-stater in football, basketball and baseball at Orchard Lake St. Mary’s and went on to become an All-America for Michigan baseball and played in the majors, was tremendous in his own right, but there was only one Tyrone Wheatley.

[Pre-order Mick McCabe's new high school sports book! Here's how to do it]

As fate would have it, it is just a few weeks shy of the day I attended Robichaud’s preseason football scrimmage 30 years ago and then spent a few hours with the young man.

The scrimmage was not going well and on a fourth-down play Wheatley, who was moved to quarterback again to begin that season, dropped into punt formation.

He received the snap from center, glanced quickly at the defense and took off running. By the time he reached the line of scrimmage he was at full speed.

He zigzagged across the field and you felt bad for the defenders. They had no chance of catching him, falling for his jukes and dropping to the ground while he zoomed untouched into the end zone.

After the scrimmage, his Robichaud teammate Ernie Baskin rattled off Wheatley’s list of nicknames: “Ty, T, Skywalker, T-Ball, ‘Rone. Some people just call him Superman.”

Yeah, that pretty much encapsulates Wheatley and his athletic abilities.

Two months earlier, at the 1990 Class B track state championship meet his junior year, Wheatley won four individual state titles — the 100 meters (10.81 seconds), 200 meters (21.90), the long jump (23-feet, 10 inches) and 110-meter hurdles (14.85). It was maybe the fifth time in his life he had run the hurdles.

That day, including the preliminaries, he ran nine races and made six jumps.

“I was tired because running the 100 into a strong wind took a lot out of me,” he said. “Then going into the 200 my legs were worn out. But my coach was telling me that ‘you came too far,’ and: ‘you’re the man. If you win the 200 we’ll win the state title.’“

Then coach Leit Jones added even more motivation: “Coach told me I could be the only high school athlete to win four events,” he said.

Wheatley won the 200 after starting in the seventh lane and became the first male to win four events in a Lower Peninsula state meet.

“I like track because it’s not like football or basketball,” he said. “It’s just you. It’s what you put into it.”

He put a lot into basketball, too, progressing from someone who could just dunk — he first dunked in the seventh grade — when he began his all-state candidate.

As a junior he averaged 18 points and at least one breath-taking highlight every game.

“I had them last year and Tyrone picked up a loose ball alone,” an official told me. “He took off at the free throw line, but he didn’t just take off — he soared to the basket. I know my chin just dropped and the whistle fell out of my mouth.”

And then there was football.

When Wheatley entered Robichaud as a freshman, coach Bob Yauck started him at quarterback in the season opener against Birmingham Detroit Country Day, even though he wanted to be a wide receiver.

“But I was playing quarterback until the third quarter,” he said. “Coach told me to play tailback and the first time I carried the ball I went like 85 yards for a touchdown."

I had seen Wheatley play several times over his first three years of high school and was impressed with his pure athletic ability.

At the time, I had no idea he would go on to gain 4,178 yards on 688 carries (6.12 yards per carry) and score 47 touchdowns at Michigan or play for 10 years in the NFL until a hamstring tear would end his career in 2004.

Back then, I had never had the opportunity to sit down with him for an extended period of time to really get to know the youngster who was the best athlete I had seen in my first 20 years at the Free Press.

So after the scrimmage I drove him to a small home in Inkster, which was part of Robichaud’s school district.

It was the home of his aunt and uncle, Jeanette and Mike Boyd. He was living with them because his father had been murdered, his stepfather died of a heart attack and his mother had an alcohol problem and moved to Mississippi.

When we walked in, he said: “Have a seat, I’ll be with you in a minute. There’s something I have to do.”

I sat down and waited while he ... washed the dishes.

I wondered if he was putting on a show for a visitor.

“No, washing the dishes was not an act,” said his aunt. “He helps around the house. He’s got his chores. They’re supposed to be done earlier than he does them sometimes, but he gets around to them.”

It was impossible to find anyone who had a bad word to say about Wheatley. He was not an honor student, but he did his work and actually tried in the classroom.

He was a leader in the school and one of the kids other students admired.

“Tyrone is the type of kid anybody would want as their son,” said Yauck, who doubled as the school principal. “He is a great athlete on the field and a great young man off the field. He cares about other people. He seems to have his act together.”

That much was clear when we spoke that evening. He was in the process of trying to decide which schools he would visit. He admitted to being a Michigan State fan growing up — he loved Lorenzo White, Carl Banks and Andre Rison.

Yet, he was enamored with U-M’s academic reputation and enjoyed his relationship with head coach Gary Moeller.

He talked about the coming season and how badly he wanted to win a state championship with the guys he had played with for four years.

Despite playing half the season at quarterback before moving to tailback, Wheatley ran for 2,010 yards and scored 33 touchdowns. In Robichaud’s 21-7 Class B state championship victory over Kingsford, he ran for 168 yards and a touchdown on 22 carries and added 13 tackles from his defensive back spot.

He talked about how he got a big head as a sophomore until a bad game against River Rouge brought him back to earth.

He also spoke about what he was hearing from college coaches, some of whom wrote letters containing only three words: “We need you!”

“The college coaches say I can be great,” he said. “They say I’m on the road to greatness. I want to be a little more than great. I want to be phenomenal.”

As I drove away that night, I thought that this is a kid who could go either way. Given his start in life, it would have been phenomenally easy for him to head down the path taken by other family members.

But I was struck by his maturity, which may have been the result of the path taken by other family members. I am not surprised one iota that he went into coaching in college and NFL and went on to become the head coach at Morgan State.

I am not surprised at all because as much as I was impressed with him as an athlete, I was even more impressed with him as a phenomenal young man.

What else would you expect from Superman?

Mick McCabe is a former longtime columnist for the Detroit Free Press. Contact him at mick.mccabe11@gmail.com. Follow him on Twitter @mickmccabe1. Save $10 on his new book, “Mick McCabe’s Golden Yearbook: 50 Great Years of Michigan’s Best High School Players, Teams & Memories,” by ordering right now at McCabe.PictorialBook.com.

